

**An (auto)ethnographic study of the relations
between reflexive development and
the production of interpersonal social research in
Salt River's Locomotive Hotel**



Mark Hilltout (<http://www.markhilltout.com/road/index.html>)

Evan Blake

Thesis Presented for the Degree of
MASTERS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE (dissertation)

In the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

February 2014



DFID

Department for
International
Development

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& SOCIAL
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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work, each significant contribution and quotation in this dissertation from the works of other people have been attributed, cited and referenced.

Evan Blake

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Abstract

Fieldwork conducted around The Locomotive Hotel, a drinking establishment in Salt River, took place across a two year period involving building relations with a diverse range of *local* or regular patrons. During this period there was a lack of reflexive capacity and insight in the researcher to contextualise and theorise the experiences of encountering these patrons in the hotel. Through prolonged, intense and tension filled fieldwork - that was seemingly unrelated to the dissertation - experience was gained that, on reflection, was fundamentally informed and in a recursive virtual dialogue with past research experiences. It was recognised that this dialogue establishes a metanarrative in relation to the fieldwork conducted in The Locomotive Hotel with a narrative traced of how insight through embodied and experienced notions of becoming through encountering difference became essential to retrospectively understanding the interactions with and between patrons in the hotel. These encounters and interactions between patrons form complex systems of relation building; systems that are established through patterns of encountering difference. Self in the hotel is generally reconstituted through dialectical relationships with difference from past to present through notions of place, memory and community. In this unfolding of past and present, a single social norm and practice in the hotel is identified, presented and discussed: the drinking of a brown bottle *quart* explores the relations of sociability between patrons. The common consumption of a beer can act as a pretext to pull otherwise very different patrons and their varied imaginings and senses of places into sustained and repeated encounters. Implicit within these relations are patterns of exclusion. Escalating tensions between self and difference can lead to irreconcilable differences emerging; differences that may be too great to be openly encountered. Such challenging differences can lead to notions of self, others, community and place being reshaped in potentially linear and closed off ways. These arguments presented in this dissertation in the context of the hotel conceptualise research as a *process* rather than a theoretical *output*. They are arguments that demonstrate the fallacy of a researcher as able to neatly and rationally describe their positional situated-ness as distinctly and demonstrably being on the outside of a group or crowd in one moment and inside the next. It is an argument for a form of ethnography and engaging with positionality that demonstrates the researcher as human, as unsure and fallible in their attempts to understand their place and relation to new contexts. It is ethnographic work that has an ethical and political commitment beyond ticking methodological checkboxes.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go out first and foremost to my funders. The ESRC-DfID joint scheme for research on international development and the African Centre for Cities have all offered generous funding to see this thesis through to completion. Without the support from these institutions the opportunity to have embarked on this journey would not have been possible. The project heads of the Alcohol, Development and Poverty in South Africa research project (the project that this Masters thesis contributes towards) also have my appreciation. Clare Herrick and Sue Parnell, thank you for the patience and understanding throughout the past three years. I started my relationship with the project team as an uncertain, confused and unconfident young man. I now close my relationship with the project still uncertain but with emerging clarity and confidence in my research form and values. This personal development would not have been possible without the opportunity you both offered me.

To Shari Daya, my supervisor of four years, your eternal patience and longing to see this thesis complete has always been appreciated. Thank you for understanding the course I had to take to produce this work.

Special mention must be made to Andrew Putter. A work colleague, a mentor, a father figure and most importantly a close friend and collaborator; I could not have asked for a more warm hearted, critical and intellectually inspiring person to produce work with. Thank you for helping me to uncover the potential becomings I hold and have shaped through working with you.

To my office mates that I have cohabited with and coproduced ever lasting memories with: cheers. Across a three year span we have had boisterous endeavours together, supported each other through personal tragedies and work stress, have been at each other's throats one moment and have broken bread and shared drink on the next. This is true collaboration. The spirit of our space of coproduction, *The Office*, lives on in my working relationships today.

Last, but most importantly, thank you to my mother and brother for the triple braided cord of support during the most tumultuous yet also productive period of our lives. The loss of my father, Michael, in late 2012 brought a tight family even closer together. It was a watershed moment that this dissertation is contextualised within. This dissertation is dedicated in his memory. His love for random encounters with people, his ability to simply phrase things to elicit a response and to ask people what were seemingly arbitrary questions once annoyed and frustrated a younger me. Only in

the year following his passing have I afforded myself the time to discover my place in the world as a researcher and as a person. In doing so I have begun to realise that which I am becoming is reflected in what once frustrated me. I now find solace in knowing that although I can never give thanks in person for how fundamentally I was shaped by my father; his being exists virtually within every reiterative productive step in my research work. Mom, the thesis is in. You can sleep easy now.

Evan Blake

12 February 2014

Three years ago you came forth. Dear, dissertation; you deserve to be done, buried and out my life. You have served as a means to an end; an important milestone against which I can reflect and discover a way forward. Aside from that I have no love or place for you. I have had relationships end, friendships burn away and parents pass in the time you've been in my life. It is time to end what you have come to represent. It is time to bring to an end the stagnation, frustration and self-insecurity I have produced through you. In a month's time I will celebrate your end although I will always be burdened with knowing how deeply rooted in me you have become.

(Personal journal: 12 January 2014)

I have given a part of myself in producing you yet it still never seems enough; when will I find my productive voice that can reach a receptive crowd? I fear it will not be through you.

(Personal journal: 14 February 2014)

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1: Disclaimer

The work represented in this dissertation is incomplete. By incomplete I suggest that at any point in time it can be returned to, added to and repurposed by any individual. It is work that demonstrates the recursive production of place through a recursive understanding of self; researcher and research subject. The work herein speaks to a recursive nature of self; the ever reconstituting nature of being through coming into constant contact and conversation with others. Throughout this dissertation this process of reconstitution will be demonstrated through a negotiation of my own becoming as well as that of the patrons of a particular drinking establishment in the Cape Town suburb of Salt River. Salt River's past provides a nebulous, indistinct growing imagining against which patrons of The Locomotive Hotel negotiate their present and future selves. It is a hazy set of relations that also came to define my period of fieldwork in the suburb; the interactions between people within and outside the hotel were something that I had to come to terms with lacking the experience to navigate and represent. The work that this dissertation has become thus represents a set of personal experience and learning; learnings that have been written as abstracted insight that may be of use for me and others as a plateau to launch new navigations into the hotel, Salt River and further interpersonal socially orientated geography work in the future. In this sense this work is not about theorising an observable phenomenon from the field. Through the production of a research process it has begun rather to provide an emerging theorisation into the developing relations between people in The Locomotive Hotel. This is work into how people come into contact, shape each other and the degree to which affordances are given for each other's differences. Within these affordances are tensions that are implicit in the development of potential connections and relations between patrons. These are tensions that have the capacity to either destroy or reconstitute the community of the hotel. These tensions cannot and should not be theorised prior to long periods engaging and unfolding the context they are deeply embedded within. To misrepresent these tensions and to dabble with them without caution I believe is unethical as it could irreparably alter the relationships and connections that people hold. The work represented within this dissertation has only begun to surface these tensions; I believe not enough time was spent developing relations

to confidently theorise such broader issues based on my experience at The Locomotive. Despite this, this dissertation will make an effort to describe the embedded relations and tensions that were encountered from a particular framing; of a particular experience and period of time spent as a patron and researching in Salt River and the hotel.

The strength of this work lies in its aim to demonstrate a research process that was undertaken for three years; a process that embeds the research in specific contexts of my own life *inside* and *outside* of the hotel and the relationship between these positions. It is a process that is profoundly personal, intimate and of me. The research content of this dissertation could only have been produced through an emerging understanding of myself in context of the hotel; an auto-ethnographically supported methodology that explores a positional understanding of relations to the world. If the purpose of a Masters dissertation is to deliver a clear cut and rational thesis then I am afraid I have failed. What I have produced however is an emerging representation of complex relations between myself and individuals, actors (used in this dissertation to describe in generalised ways people, thing and ideas holding relations and the capacity to affect), patrons and other assumed subject positions to be asserted onto people I encountered and did not encounter. These are subjectivities that this thesis explores in context of The Locomotive Hotel and attempts to unfold and address in a multifaceted manner. The arguments I make throughout this thesis are about reconstituting self; a process of productive tension, of being pulled in multiple directions and of being in conversation with difference. This dissertation is of these processes, it traces these processes of being a researcher and a patron in The Locomotive Hotel. Through situated positionality it explores the experiences of tensions borne from isolation, frustration, denial, anger, confusion, acceptance and reconstituting self that are embodied within this dissertation. It is through embracing and exploring these situated positions that the relations and tensions within the hotel beyond my own experience become apparent. This dissertation is representative of processes constituted of relations far larger than what was experienced and recorded for the production of this thesis. The experiences, moments and conversations captured are of broader relations and contexts that extend far beyond a level of comprehension offered by my own position. This dissertation recognises this. It also recognises that these relationships between actors (that I am part of) that form processes of place, memory, belonging and community are recursive and reiterative; ever changing and incomplete by their very nature, impossible to represent from a single position. The research presented is not a means to an ends to produce a dissertation, rather the dissertation has become a means in itself to represents on-going processes within me and the hotel. The arguments,

discussions and work presented here is but a snapshot moment of a particular set of reflections and relations. The end product of this dissertation can be seemingly patchwork; it is a product of multiple insights, thinking, encounters and reading throughout a three year process. In terms of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), a body of work I have drawn much inspiration from, this thesis could be thought of as a *body without organs*. I acknowledge it is rough and incomplete. It represents my thoughts and process at the time of writing; of being a wandering and productive entity constantly trying to encounter new thought and new crowds. In this dissertation I represent myself and the thesis process as ever nearing but always an arm's reach away from an actualisation that gives hope for finding order, structure and symmetry. It is an incomplete actualisation that allows for a steady, conscious state of productive potentials. Neither this thesis nor the self it represents have achieved this at this time, but the insight the process has produced is invaluable.

Franny recounts a dream: "There is a desert. Again, it wouldn't make any sense to say that I am in *the* desert. It's a panoramic vision of the desert, and it's not a tragic or uninhabited desert. It's only a desert because of its ocher color and its blazing, shadowless sun. There is a teeming crowd in it, a swarm of bees, a rumble of soccer players, or a group of Tuareg. I am on the edge of the crowd, at the periphery; but I belong to it, I am attached to it by one of my extremities, a hand or foot. I know that the periphery is the only place I can be, that I would die if I let myself be drawn into the center of the fray, but just as certainly if I let go of the crowd. This is not an easy position to stay in, it is even very difficult to hold, for these beings are in constant motion and their movements are unpredictable and follow no rhythm. They swirl, go north, then suddenly east; none of the individuals in the crowd remains in the same place in relation to the others. So I too am in perpetual motion; all this demands a high level of tension, but it gives me a feeling of violent, almost vertiginous, happiness," A very good schizo dream, To be fully a part of the crowd and at the same time completely outside of it, removed from it: to be on the edge, to take a walk like Virginia Woolf (never again will I say, "I am this, I am that").

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987)

1.2: In context

Throughout this thesis process The Locomotive Hotel has provided a specific framing in which tensions, relations and the development of research and thought can be interrogated. The

Locomotive Hotel is a space where 'locals' to the suburb of Salt River can come together on a daily basis, find familiar company and sustain a sense of place and belonging in Salt River. These locals may include residents and it may not; it is a group of people who generally find familiarity and comfort in what the hotel has to offer in Salt River. This familiarity and comfort is not based in delineated and limited notions of a singular community. It is familiarity that emerges from entering a space that is representative of diverse and negotiated imaginings of a suburb that share common threads. It is finding familiarity in a sense of diversity that defines Salt River for local patrons at the hotel; there is a common appreciation for the hotel as a nexus point for people of different backgrounds. As an individual who became a patron at The Locomotive, the place also holds personal significance. It is a place at the confluence of emerging connections within me; positions of being a researcher and an actor holding multiple other subject positions in relation to other patrons. I have found that the hotel has become more than just a spatial framing for research; it represents an actor in itself. It is an actor going through the same internal and external conversations much like its patrons. As an actor the hotel develops recursive and reiterative senses of place and popular memory through the navigation of relations between its patrons. These relations are at the core of the discussions presented in this dissertation. They are relations that are implicated in my own process and in the interactions of patrons and within the hotel. At a foundational level they are the relations between entities of self and a crowd of difference: the relations occurring unconsciously and virtually as a pull-and-give struggle between a conceptualisation of self against a perceived construction of entities that represent difference existing beyond self. These are relations of encountering difference, of coming to terms with it. They are relations of recognising the elements of self that are reflected in perceived difference and in turn developing the potentials for self to be reconstituted as a result of the encounter. The discussions presented in this dissertation are of these relations in context of The Locomotive Hotel: the relations I experienced and navigated from my position, how they have manifested and how it has shaped and continues to shape the development of a sense of place and memory inscribed onto the space of the hotel. This pivotal understanding has in turn shaped my aims and objectives.

The central aim of this thesis is to uncover the foundational nature of relations in Salt River's Locomotive Hotel as experienced from my own position and contextualised in a case study where memory, place and drinking intersect in the hotel. The objectives borne from this aim are all embedded in each discussion chapter in some form. The first objective attempts to make complex the notion of how the relations embedded within me and the personal process of actualising

reflexivity is immutable from understanding the relations embedded in Salt River. In essence my own reflexive development has enabled an emerging understanding of the importance of virtual relations that underpin everyday conversations and encounters in Salt River. In understanding the nature of these virtual connections of potential this thesis has made it an objective to explore in terms of the hotel how people are brought together across their differences in sustained ways. In these connections across differences this thesis also attempts to identify potential pretexts or means embedded within the confluence of virtual relations in the hotel that can begin to allow for actualised relationships between different actors. This thesis also makes an objective of exploring in what ways these processes and actualised relations are both inclusive and exclusive in contexts broader than The Locomotive. I feel this needs to be investigated to make complex the potential assumption in this dissertation that the fundamental nature of relations in the hotel are based in recognising and generating heterogeneity. Although this is true, what is understood as acceptable heterogeneity has limits that are in turn defined by some form of difference. An established difference is also an important component to building relations in the hotel; providing an *other* to be stimulated by and to develop a notion of self against. There is no binary of exclusion or inclusion but rather a careful balancing of relations within and outside of the hotel. The discussions within this dissertation take interest in what way these tensions are navigated.

1.3: Outlining relations

The methods chapter that follows this introduction does not provide a standard methodological outline. Rather than an outline, the methods are described in terms of a discussion that traces the development of a productive process. This is a process that has fundamentally altered the course of the thesis process and is deeply embedded within the work I currently engage in. It is in describing this process that a research context is created for the discussion chapters that follow to be placed within. Although the chapter has an atypical length, it necessarily outlines the becoming of this dissertation; it gives the reader context of the moment of time and thought in which this dissertation was produced. The literature review of this dissertation also gives context to this thesis. Rather than contextualising an experiential context like the methods chapter that precedes it, this chapter will provide a theoretical and thought-based context. Through a lens of thought starting from Deleuze and Guattari concerning conversation and becoming through encounters the literature review examines place based literature, case studies concerning popular memory and sociability in

terms of African cityness. It is the thought in these bodies of literature that this dissertation contributes towards. This is followed by a methodological and epistemological review also in the context of a becoming of self but in terms of reflexive development and positional awareness as a researcher. I argue that these are literatures foundational to each discussion, providing the rigor to support a link between my own internal processes and analyses of relations within the hotel.

The first discussion chapter to follow the literature review explores some potential themes that establish hooks for relations to be built within the diverse narratives, memories and stories I encountered in my time at The Locomotive and Salt River. These narratives and experiences engage with each other through forms of dialogue; a back and forth sharing across difference and through imaginings and accounts from past to present. For the patrons of the hotel, the past informs the present of the hotel in every conceivable way, shaping the mundane in not only apparent and obvious ways but also virtual, unconscious ways as well. These configurations and permeations are affected by and, in turn, affect actors from the multiple hotels in Salt River's past to the singular remaining hotel at present. The discussion chapter argues that these relationships between the past and present are so pervasive, so central to producing and sustaining connections across different networks, that someone with no preconfigured sense of experience or connection to Salt River in the past unknowingly produces, from their own subject positions, a memory and imagining of Salt River and the hotels. Past and present, real and imagined are one in the same in the experiences of and between actors. This discussion chapter takes some length to establish the recursive nature of these relations across time; exploring how marginal and friction filled relations in the past that were hard fought for are now assumed at present as a norm. The discussions in this chapter attempt to make inroads to approach and unfold these varied dialogues that shape and inform the continued existence of each other, ultimately providing a network of potentials to form reconstituted identities over and over again. This chapter, although lengthy, establishes key case study content for the chapters to follow to build argument from.

The period of fieldwork in Salt River contains valuable insights that, although they were not immediately realised or actualised, inevitably shaped my thinking and being in multiple unknown ways. Through engaging with, being immersed in and trying to understand the context of relations in the hotel several social practices and norms were identified that could begin to bring me into sustained relations with other actors. The second discussion chapter discusses one of these social

practises that became especially prevalent during the time spent as a patron at The Locomotive. The drinking of a brown bottle *quart* sized beer acts as a point of engagement that brings patrons into common relation across their differences. It begins to anchor down the otherwise virtual connections and relationships held between patrons into actual conversation and engagement. Practices like the drinking and sharing of a *quart* act as points of connection and as a means for actors to be pulled into relation with one another. This chapter argues that this allows a multiplicity of virtual relations that are otherwise unknown and unconscious to patrons to begin to be surfaced and engaged with in mundane, rooted and cognitive ways. Empathy in a sustained actualised connection can begin to foster an emerging appreciation for heterogeneity between actors, allowing actors to realise that in their difference each person has an equal and relevant place. These practices could be the machines that drive actualised potential in the hotel, to connect people across difference with the profound recognition that as individuals they are constituted by their encounters with different people. It is the reflexive acknowledgement that a person shapes and is in turn shaped by encountering different subjectivities. Far beyond enforcing singular identities and communities in Salt River's hotel that they may be perceived as at a cursory reading, I argue through this discussion chapter that these points of interaction provide the medium or points of nodal connection for the beginnings or proto-forms for the most inclusive of social practices – one that enables encounters across difference while by this very commitment, refusing to simplify or discount the “other”.

The final discussion chapter asks if these wilful encounters with difference in the hotel are indeed the norm, querying if engaging across differences always holds true for social practices and norms within The Locomotive. This chapter examines forms of difference that through my position were noted as excluded from the hotel. Through this examination I hypothetically posit why such stark differences are present between hotel patrons and other groups in Salt River and if these differences are too wide to reconcile through the current forms of sociability and social practices embedded in the hotel. I acknowledge in this chapter that I may not have the best suitable position to offer an understanding of these tensions. Through exploring heated tensions with a seemingly irreconcilable difference in my own process I discuss how this may enable forms of empathy that allow me to begin to appreciate why patrons may hesitate to reach out to difference.

1.4: Forward unto an emerging non-representational method

I believe the strength of this dissertation lies in its ability to problematise a case study that could have been read and written in a very superficial way. This could have been a case study of old regulars in an old drinking establishment producing a place that acts as a final bastion of a memory of a suburb that is now changing through the emergence of an African foreign national immigrant population. It could have been a certain reading of place that is connected to a linear, nostalgic history that reinforces a singular sense of community: that of a cosmopolitan Salt River from a time long passed. Previous drafts of this dissertation in early stages of the thesis were guilty of this. In this dissertation however I have refused at all levels to assume this problematic or any sort of presumption upon the context of the hotel. I have rather made a commitment to make complex such assumptions. Although I make mention of example points in each discussion borne from my fieldwork there is never an assumption that these are definitive or universally experienced by all other actors. There is an implicit understanding throughout that experience is infinitely manifold in nature. What I present as case study material are memories, events, norms and practices as experienced, embodied and represented through my own positions. These are a set of positions developed and informed by my fieldwork in Salt River through to my work in the present. What this means is that in my interactions with actors, affecting and being affected by them, I have within myself constructed a certain narrative of Salt River and the hotel establishments from the past to the present. It is a past that I found relevance in, constructed and made to have very real implications for how I understood and engaged with the present although I had never experienced it in the realm of the actual in the past. These are imaginings of the past, held in the virtual, informed and shaped by my subject positions through my encounters and conversations with the patrons of The Locomotive Hotel. The stories, memories, narratives of Salt River and its hotels that I encountered were unconsciously processed through an inner conversation within my self between notions of what is self and what is different, enticing and contested; notions shaped by my encounters with *other* actors and crowds. This parsing has allowed me (and continues to allow me) to find relevance in these stories, to relate to them in a manner that is relatable and relevant to my own identity.

CHAPTER 2: An outline of a becoming: a methodological process to actualising reflexivity

2.1: Introduction to a process

This is a conversation, an outline, of some of the process I am cognitive of and have engaged with in the past three years. This conversation serves as a methodology chapter but also serves a broader purpose. This conversation will speak to a journey of developing reflexivity: it is a journey of developing an ethnographic method founded in the relations between self and others encountered. It is a narrative of becoming and discovering my own self as a researcher; of reconstituting my own self over and over again. The process that is outlined herein takes great strides in being as transparent and honest as possible: it is an attempt to trace the dialogue between progression of research and the development of self. It is about tracing the development of processes that realise self and research as inseparable. What is outlined in this chapter as a methodological discussion is better suited to the overall tone of this dissertation: of reconstituting oneself through experience of completing a thesis, and in turn having the thesis develop from new insight and personal growth allowing for previously unfinished work to be reanalysed and repurposed. This chapter will earnestly describe the uneven progress of self, thought and work in the field that I experienced. The unfolding of my own subject positions come into play throughout this outlining, exploring how in problematizing my own positions over time produced new complexities and opportunities for thinking about my work at present and in the past. Embedded within describing these methods is a deep frustration and tension that emerged while working as a full-time postgraduate student. This tension was borne from my inability to be able to comprehend and articulate the relationship I was experiencing between my situated positions, otherness and difference. I hope that it can begin to be made clear through this chapter that this dissertation could not have been produced without having experienced these frustrations. The right circumstance and conditions were only met recently for this dissertation to be actualised; for my confused, insecure, potential and almost realised self to somewhat find an emerging structure that brought my experiences into a form that could be delivered as a dissertation. In describing stages of tension filled listless, aimless and frustrated wondering throughout this chapter I refer to this difficult process building in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the formation of a body without organs. This period, in which on the surface it seems like not much is happening, is an inwardly focused foundational and formative

period: it is an internal struggle to form oneself in relation to difference encountered. It is the struggle founded on the difference that is encountered externally and also inside an actor's unconscious. It is a period that is inarticulate, messy, uneven, asymmetrical and unformed as a body desperately tries to make sense of its self. It is a process of a body making sense through dialogue with itself around internal difference and a centre, and this dialogue in relation to dialogues with external differences and a centre. This methods chapter represents this notion of becoming and process of developing self as a researcher; it is reflected at all stages of my thesis process - particularly in exploring the productive process of writing drafts from 2011 through to present. Discussions throughout this dissertation will expand on this notion of a developing self in relation to difference of others and use it to demonstrate important formative research processes.

2.2: Unknowing self

My own set of positions that I am aware of - positions that shape my interest and approach to fieldwork - are partly that of a young white man from a working-middle class upbringing and once defined himself through his studies. If my undergraduate was defined by being cocksure, confidence and high grades my time as a postgraduate student in Cape Town could be defined through feelings of incompetence, constant uncertainty and unease coupled with moments of tense excitement and self-discovery. In this uneasiness was a dual tension: a deepening sense of isolation that led to me feel as if I wasn't being constructively challenged or productive through my relations. Conversely these same relations had led to me being highly productive internally; fuming and worrying over my frustrations as I tried to produce some form of self as a response to what I perceived as isolation. This was isolation experienced and constantly perpetuated on various levels: between self and fieldwork, between the experience of self and abstract theoretical thinking and between self and others including my peers and academic superiors. Criticisms around my attempts to produce work that were described as constructive felt anything but as I believed they failed to capture and provide productive assistance regarding the tensions and relations I was unable to articulate. Frequenting seminars, attending classes in honours, auditing classes in Masters and immense amounts of reading resulted in a wealth of knowledge that I had collected. Bodies of literature such as consumptive geographies, core urban theory, diaspora studies, popular memory and narrative literature and other fields of human geography were constantly on my mind. Despite a keen understanding of how these literatures operated at a theoretical level, they existed in isolation removed from personal

context. Despite this, for over two years I struggled to identify a body of literature that my thesis may be able speak to. As I studied literatures in isolation - as a student whose own experience and in turn understanding was removed from the texts - I had become removed from my own thesis. My own thesis became something that existed as something outside of me. In turn I could not contextualise the literature that had always existed separately outside of fieldwork into something that now existed within my own situated experience. I was trained to regard the literature review as something to be produced outside of work in the field, to provide a lens to understand work after the fact, not as a tool to develop insight alongside and in conversation with growing experience in the field. What I had experienced was the right set of conditions for learning but without the presence of a forcing factor; something to enable the right conditions for reflexivity and humility to develop in relation and in context to something. This is not reflexivity produced through ethnography as read in manuals but reflexivity borne through experience, personal growth and development; given additional rigor through the support of theoretical material. In outlining this narrative I assure the reader (and myself) that it is not to find an outlet to moan rather this conversation is to demonstrate how fundamental an experience of coming to terms with tension and frustration was in shaping a dissertation. It is to establish the uncomfortable tension developing within me, the uncomfortable tension that is critical for production and for a want for difference, innovative thought and reflexivity to emerge.

2.3: Tension borne from the field

My process of developing the thesis was as fraught as the general inner turmoil described above. The broad idea for a project concerned with alcohol was initiated in collaboration between the ESRC-DfID joint scheme for research on international development and the African Centre for Cities. Having been asked to take on a Masters by dissertation in relation to this project, I saw an opportunity to produce a thesis that worked with the sociability of drinking in Cape Town, specifically the urban industrial fringe areas of the city where I was living at the time. Working towards delivering a proposal I was heavily inspired by the collection of work that had at the time recently been published by Jayne et al. (2006, 2008, 2010, 2011), Holloway et al. (2008) and Valentine et al. (2008) on social geographies of drinking in the United Kingdom. In preparing a proposal I was uncertain whether or not to develop a specific problematic for the thesis to focus on without having spent generous amounts of time beyond my desk. In preparing a proposal I was unsure why I felt this way, unable to articulate and justify the forming values and ethics held with

into an academic audience. In having come straight out of Honours I did not possess the right language, experience and confidence to articulate a method of working that could be grappled with by the senior academics I engaged with. All I could do was to rely on ethnographic manuals and articles (Atkinson 1992, Marcus 1998, Herbert 2000, Fabian 2002, Delamont 2007, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) that provided, I feel, dry yet still theoretically informative accounts of the relationship between work in the field and developed academic thought. Although Rose's body of work on methodology (1995, 1997, 2003, 2012) has worked through the tensions I describe throughout this thesis, I had no personal experience at the time of reading the work to contextualise Rose's description of inner tensions of being a researcher that I now find inseparable from thinking on my own research process. This hazy uncertainty and inability to articulate and actualise the work I wanted to be a representation of myself during the proposal stage had repercussions for my fieldwork that followed. An honest account of my fieldwork would best be summarised as aimless wondering and engaging in seemingly unimportant and arbitrary conversations and encounters. I did not realise until much later that it was these experiences (experiences which actually constituted the majority of my fieldwork notes and early criticised attempts to conceptualise a post-fieldwork thesis) that became the most theoretically important "data" for this thesis: the relations and encounters I had with people that existed beyond recorded snippets of conversations.

In the middle of 2011, proceeding towards the proposal stage, I began aimlessly wondering around the Salt River and Woodstock area. In conversations with senior members of the larger project team I had outlined an interest in conducting a thesis in these suburbs because of the fringe position they occupy in relation to Cape Town central city. Having lived in Salt River for the first quarter of 2011 I had day-to-day conversations with older residents who had described the varied histories of the area. These anecdotal stories included narratives of the suburb from its industrial importance as a port, rail works and clothing textile hub to the once vibrant social and cultural cosmopolitan life that was described to be similar and as lively as District Six. This social milieu of Salt River's industrial heyday seemed an interesting context to begin exploring the social life of drinking and alcohol in the area. Following this justification to senior project staff and putting it forward in my proposal I began aimlessly wondering around Salt River as a pilot period. While haplessly wondering the streets of Salt River and Woodstock I began to start uncovering online blog articles (Kamaldien 2009; Lategan 2009a, 2009b; Vynbos 2009) about long lost and well-remembered drinking spots in Salt River. These personal accounts of Salt River from reporters and bloggers in Cape Town were spurred on by the condemnation of a set of informal building structures including a *shebeen*, named The Blue

Buildings. These structures were built alongside the now decade-long closed-down Junction Hotel; the most prominent hotel establishment in Salt River up to the mid-nineties. The presence of the Junction Hotel in the news long after its closure (a closure that did not receive much coverage when it stopped operating due to financial difficulty for years leading to its closure; speculated by Salt River locals as a result of bankruptcy and mismanagement) brought forth memories and personal accounts of the hotel and its important place in the social life of Salt River. These accounts of the hotel and its place in Salt River sat in my mind as I tried to mentally map a relation to existing work in the area by Mammon (2003) and Le Grange and Mammon (2010) on development plans in the in conjunction with other research on gentrification (Garside 1993; Kotze and Van der Merwe 2000; Visser 2002; Visser and Kotze 2008); pieces of research that have speculated what the social costs of urban renewal would be in the area if the municipality driven urban renewal framework favoured certain forms of gentrification-led-renewal. The sociability in Salt River driven through the hotels (as described by the accounts I had come across) seemed to have potential as a line of inquiry for more targeted fieldwork. Conversations with acquaintances met while residing in Salt River and connections from my Honour thesis had described tensions felt between the old and new forms of sociability in Salt River; in different ways there was a perception that an old way of life and of community was being lost. For research connections from my Honours thesis in Valhalla Park this was felt through the continued closures of clothing and textile manufacturers. A distinct sense of what being a worker in Salt River meant was being lost through the loss of a remembered jovial social life on the streets of the suburb between the station and factories. The dynamic within the suburb changed as factories shut and different groups began commuting in and out of the suburb for new forms of emerging commerce and work. For long-time residents and business owners I had met by chance the same tension was felt between old and new but experienced in different forms and relations. The brief conversations I had while piloting fieldwork spoke to concerns over foreign national African “immigrant” populations buying and renting out commercial and residential lots in the suburb. Salt River was perceived as becoming unsafe with these changes; those once familiar neighbourhoods around where houses and businesses stood were now described as different, not quite only unsafe or dirty, but generally just not the same as they once were. As I prepared to begin fieldwork proper I believed that within this collection of anecdotal wisdom concerning Salt River lay the unexplored nugget that could develop into a thesis. I suppose I was somewhat correct in that a dissertation did emerge from this line of inquiry, its form at present however far different than what I could have ever imagined three years earlier.

Even with a somewhat informed specific focus now set on Salt River I was still unsure of how fieldwork would play out. Having come straight out from reading as many articles on ethnography and participatory research in geography as possible in preparation for conducting fieldwork, I was falsely confident that I knew precisely how I would engage with the mythical “field” beyond the university. I had no experience to realise that I should not have prepared to enter a “field” as a “researcher” but rather to have prepared as a person who was to work in a world that is both familiar and remarkably different. I entered “fieldwork” placing a single, linear subjectivity upon myself: a postgraduate research student transfixed on abiding by the literature on outsider/insider positions accompanied with a deep desire to develop a theory in an accountable and objective manner. Without the necessary experience I undoubtedly feigned self-confidence to compensate for the confusion and insecurity I still deeply feel. This feigned self-confidence was bolstered by the multiple ethnographic and more qualitative fieldwork techniques I had spent time researching: use of photography in the field (Schwartz 1996; Latham and McCormack 2007, 2009; Rose 2008, 2012;), experimenting with affect and non-representational theory methodological concerns (Latham and McCormack 2004; Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008; Lorimer 2008), keeping a form of a journal of my experiences in the field and attempting to make use of it as a mirror for finding a reflexive processes (Myers 2001) and life history interviews (Martin 1999; Field 2008). I believed I had covered my bases concerning methodological approaches. It was only months later when I started to produce drafts of my methods chapter to my supervisor (the first time my work in the field was being examined by someone senior) that deep insecurities began to surface around the work I had produced in Salt River. I had to acknowledge that in terms of by-the-book methods I had no clue what I was doing in the field.

I had no clue because the moment I was faced with the reality of conducting fieldwork in real contexts the body of literature that I thought myself to be so well versed in began to fall apart. The literature could not provide a crutch or support for my own experiences. It held no situated relevancy to my own work. Every day spent “in the field” (becoming a patron at the hotel and forming relations with people) I increasingly began to feel that experiences were more relatable as a young, insecure and confused twenty-two year old white lad from Durban rather than as a research student from the University of Cape Town. Fieldwork during 2011 and early 2012 (the breakdown of the process of which will be described in the following paragraph) began to build potential, virtual learnings in my engagements with the world. In this sense I would not define the experience as a “researcher” engaging with the “field” but rather as an actor, one of many people, encountering and

conversing with the world around surrounding and within them. I began to feel the inseparable relationship between “doing” research and finding oneself as a person who holds multiple identities being placed in new contexts. It became a deeply positional and situated experience: a lesson that no literature could account and prepare me for prior to working in Salt River.

2.4: Becoming a patron – somewhere between comfortable and uncomfortable

The first couple of weeks of “proper fieldwork” in Salt River were spent frequenting different drinking places that I had heard mentioned in conversations with contacts during pilot fieldwork. Well known busy establishments in the area that friends and acquaintances had suggested were also visited. My goal was to find a place where I could become familiar with a group of people, ask questions around their experiences in Salt River and begin to unfold some sort of phenomena that seemed to have emerged from anecdotal stories in the pilot stage. In this early stage of fieldwork in Salt River I was drawn to a particular bar, The Locomotive Hotel, on multiple occasions. The Locomotive is located centrally in Salt River, found at the crossroads of several busy main thoroughfares. I had initial pangs of anxiety on whether or not to visit the hotel in the busy first few days of fieldwork. The austere and battered façade of the hotel initially made me hesitant. I had already visited quite a few establishments in the area and had found a few leads that may have been worth following up on. I felt that maybe the leads from the more upscale bars on Salt River’s Upper East Side and some of the more informal drinking establishments I had just visited would perhaps be better follow ups providing a wider range of people to encounter. I took the plunge however and immediately felt a connection the establishment on the first visit. The exterior that I found imposing moments earlier suited the early 20th century traditionally styled English pub inside. The exterior and interior styles spoke back to old hotel establishments and sports clubs still present in my own hometown that I once frequented as a teenager. I had learned from the bartender and the few locals that I had quickly befriended that this was in fact the very last remaining hotel in Salt River still fully operating as it did in the past. This meant the establishment still functioned as both a pub and hotel coexisting together in the same establishment in a manner similar to prominent hotels from Salt River’s industrial heyday, including The Junction. The Locomotive Hotel is all that remains of the legacy of these institutions in Salt River. From the time of day I had frequented the hotel throughout the week, mainly between two and six in the afternoon, the patrons I had encountered were

distinctly mixed across age, economic income and race more so than my earlier experiences in other drinking establishments in Salt River.

I felt a strange mix of simultaneous unease and comfort in the hotel. As a person with a deeply rooted sense of belonging to home I felt a connection to the shabby and dingy bar; the physicality of the bar resonated with me in ways I still cannot explain but undoubtedly bound with emotional connection to my experiences as a teenager in similar establishments. This comfort made it far easier for me to talk to people and to openly engage with fellow patrons: to laugh, poke fun at each other, comment on sport together and buy rounds for each other in mutual exchange for some interesting stories. The sense of unease that lies in opposition to this has been far more difficult for me to surface and articulate for this thesis. I feel that a sense of inner turmoil quickly emerged from the position I thought I held as a researcher: an impossibly objective, reflexive agent occupying outsider and insider positions, supposedly constantly aware of the positions they move through and occupy. I struggled and felt as if I failed in this completely. For the purpose of conducting fieldwork for a thesis I felt that the Evan Blake who was first and foremost one actor amongst many radically equal actors in the hotel, who feels comfortable and at home at the space, encountering and connecting with people in small ways that can build towards significance over time inevitably lay at odds with another reading of myself. This reading is of an Evan Blake who is first and foremost a research student with a theoretical commitment. From the position of what I thought produced good research I felt increasingly an outsider with every new visit to the hotel. My self as holding a “researcher” identity was feeling at odds with the homely boy an unchangeable part of me still felt held onto; a part of me that felt comfort and an inexplicable connection to the hotel beyond the purpose of research. It was a subject position I tried to repress in fear that it would send me off course from what fieldwork should be focused on: producing data to surface phenomena to theorise.

What I had unknowingly slipped into was in complete defiance to my own formative ethical commitments that I had made several months earlier. I was fixated on addressing fieldwork as a rationalist problem to be solved; a problem that through a realist approach was detached from my position and affect in the world. Having tried to suppress subjectivities deeply rooted in my upbringing I encountered immense difficulty in acknowledging the importance of the interpersonal work with people. Early on in my work the process of having mundane conversations with people in

the hotel, encountering new people and having engagements that did not amount to much beyond some form of connection between people began to feel like a hindrance rather than a boon. Weeks upon weeks of these sorts of engagements seemingly produced no “data” of real value for the thesis topic I had fuzzily emerging in my mind; a notion of what the thesis should be still rooted in what I had proposed months earlier. The ethnography manuals also became of very little use in the contexts I found myself in; I had no experience and no idea how to consider implementing the literature I had thought myself to be well versed in. The preconfigured tools and methods laid out in these literatures began to seem incongruent to what I was experiencing, I could not configure their practical implementation in the hotel. Taking photographs for a photo journal of fieldwork in Salt River and the hotel after a couple of weeks was met with comments and criticisms that made me feel as if I had lost any sort of progress with people. These were methods that figured them as research subjects rather than fellow patrons and people. Trying to employ these methods was a strategy quickly abandoned because of how uncomfortable it made me feel in relation to people I felt I was beginning to warm up to. Unknowingly for the duration of fieldwork I tapped into the subjectivity I tried to suppress; that of a young man who just enjoyed encountering new people and having friendly conversation, enjoying it especially so because of how it resonated with a formative period of his life. I began to make use of a sure-fire method I had employed throughout my life and was known to produce results: a perpetual cheerful demeanour, wide grin and being open to conversation. During fieldwork I justified this style of working to myself as experientially designed participant observation; still insisting on the need to validate whatever methodological decision I took with some form of academic rigor.

Despite this, fieldwork constantly felt as if it was never enough. Despite months interacting with people I felt (a feeling reinforced by feedback from academic structures) that I had not produced enough “useful” data or narratives for a substantial thesis. No matter how much of an insider I felt as a barfly at The Locomotive over time - able to engage and encounter ever growing numbers of new faces – this position sat at uncomfortable odds with what had been entrenched within me as “proper” fieldwork to produce a thesis. This inner tension was inevitably embodied and reproduced in my fieldwork: as much I felt like an insider (a patron that felt relevance within the hotel and could relate to the manifold but overlapping senses of popular history that was narrated by patrons) I still felt an outsider, feeling increasingly removed from the hotel after every visit, coupled with dread to return the following day. These tensions broiling inside of me made me begin to resent my fieldwork at a deeply fundamental level. This ensured that a part of me, as a researcher, constantly felt an

outsider. I had produced the position of a deeply internally conflicted, bumbling research student who believed that he wasn't engaging in the right way in the field.

2.5: Re-emerging self through encounters with others

Into late 2011 and early 2012 I began talking regularly with post-graduate colleagues, friends and acquaintances about the research I was trying to pull together on the hotels in Salt River. A couple of colleagues had recommended individuals I should meet because of the connection they held to Salt River and the hotels "back in the day". Two people of particular interest were suggested and were contacted. Parallel to this, visits to the hotel were still frequent despite my held inner tensions. As I became somewhat more familiar with the hotel and regarded as a young local patron by the regulars I began to hear more nuanced stories and personal experiences. Many of the stories shared between regular patrons and I began to relate to the hotels of the past and The Locomotive's connection to this hotel history of Salt River. After a couple of months in the hotel the historical social relationship between the hotels, its patrons and Salt River developed into a research angle I wanted to focus on and pursue for a dissertation write up. This informed my interviews with the two contacts. Both contacts had known each other for decades; both had worked in various hotels in Salt River as young people and continued to be involved with the hotels in the area years later in the nineties. Separate interviews were conducted with these two individuals across the period of an afternoon followed by a group discussion including myself where discussion was held around the experiences I had so far in The Locomotive Hotel. These different discussions took the form of life history conversations rather than formal interviews. No questions were prepared aside from an adlibbed introductory explanation about my interest in the hotels from past to present to both contacts and explaining the time I had spent so far in The Locomotive. Following these interviews I returned to fieldwork for several more weeks to follow up with patrons on some of the points brought forward by the two contacts. With these continued visits it became increasingly obvious how my own position was being interrogated by patrons. This raised tensions I had still held around what my subject position as a researcher was in the hotel. What exactly was I in the hotel? What was the purpose of me being there? Was I a researcher in the field or a young patron who enjoyed encountering the varied and different faces that frequented the hotel? Was it a bit of both? What of the elements and subject positions of myself I hadn't (and still probably have not) recognised and realised? In what ways were

they affected and in turn affected others in the hotel? I struggled with how I represented myself in the hotel yet I had begun to find ways to navigate the tension internally.

What I was exposed to at that point was a different experience to my previous fieldwork during Honours. For the course of Honours fieldwork in Valhalla Park during 2010 I had a fieldwork assistant accompany me to assist in guidance and translating Afrikaans (I am particularly terrible at speaking Afrikaans, my ability to listen and understand being far better). During that fieldwork experience when someone had asked about me; who I was, where I was from or what was the pretext for me doing this work, my guide would give her pre-set response. This response was produced from her continuous summing up of me across our time spent together conducting interviews; undoubtedly being a White boy from the University of Cape Town who stood out in the area had a significant role in producing a response. My representation to people and the initial introductions made to them were not entirely my own but rather a shifting response from my assistant; an introduction that was still largely about a white boy coming from “The University” and doing research. So important was the identity of being a “researcher” that I believe I began to internalise and embody it entering into my Masters. Over a year later since my Honours had ended and a few months into research in Salt River I no longer had the crutch of having someone else acting as a medium - representing me to others in a way that was informed by an existing relationship. For the first time I had to engage with this myself. As I engaged with patrons more and more over the months I realised it was common practice in The Hotel for patrons to continuously interrogate each other over their background. This development left me increasingly unsure of how to represent myself. I became increasingly unsure if my previous account days earlier would best describe me a person as I was now, not even considering what I had said yesterday or how I would depict myself tomorrow. As I started building connections with patrons this tension increasingly burrowed away in my mind. I had just described myself to a person in a particular way a day or two earlier but in a current conversation I had depicted myself in a way that may be seen as incongruent. I felt that perhaps I had misrepresented myself; that what we had just spoken about had surfaced something that would perhaps better represent who I felt to be: not only as a patron in the hotel but also as a young man and a university student. I was beginning to realise in a very preliminary, unconscious way that I was being continuously affected and reconstituted in different ways on different days through my interactions with every patron I encountered in the hotel. Long forgotten parts of me were being engaged with, becoming excited and turned on, manifesting and defining my interaction with an individual at a specific moment in time and space. This was an invisible, virtual exchange that existed beyond our

spoken words, becoming more and more realised yet also changing with every conversation and encounter.

2.6: Watershed

Proceeding into early 2012 I knew I lacked the emotional intelligence, reflexive capability and articulation to be able to fully come to terms with my fieldwork experience. The emotion and affect of the experience was something I was not able to articulate in my own mind let alone on paper in the form of draft dissertation chapters. In attempting to produce draft chapters I was still concerned that what I had observed, experienced and recorded during fieldwork would not be enough for a passable thesis. I could not comprehend in what form what I had experienced in a seemingly intangible way could be sufficient for a thesis in its own right. The form of the thesis I was attempting to produce and the arguments I was working with at the time did not truly fit the nature of my experience. What I had experienced in the hotel was not a definitive set of objective data. My experience in the hotel was more akin to the outline of a becoming, a becoming that (unknown at the time) would only begin to be actualised later in the thesis process. Without the necessary experience and insight an overwhelming fear of the state of my fieldwork coupled with the guidance I was receiving from my seniors led me to believe I was in a serious position where my experience and attempts at theorising were insubstantial. In a desperate attempt to contextualise this experience, give rigor to the formative ideas in my mind that I was struggling over, and demonstrate to my supervisor and project superiors that I was in fact not a bumbling and inept student I cram read literature and produced rough drafts that attempted to show support by theoretical texts. These drafts were ultimately an artifice and most of what I read was of little use. Regardless, I felt pressured to plough ahead. The net results of this period were deep feelings of self-loathing and abhorrence for the time I had wasted conducting fieldwork that now seemed insufficient. I felt as confused and despondent as I had during early stages of fieldwork: literatures were unable to provide easy answers to my dilemma and emerging insights into the experience would often fall short; misshapen, half-produced ideas without a form of articulation to begin to be realised. I waged an internal battle between continuing on this frustrated course and the alternative of reconsidering everything I had produced thus far. This second position was inspired by the constant knowing that my fieldwork experience was not just a limited amount of time in which I collected data and observable phenomena; it became about me being brought into relations within another. Ultimately

I attempted to push my cognitive dissonance aside and produce draft chapters of the thesis that I felt were more traditionally suitable for a dissertation but still ultimately ended up as half-hearted musings. I presented these attempted drafts to my supervisor; these inarticulate and uncertain drafts, and the drafts that followed, were ill representative of my experience. The constructive criticism received with every draft once again reinforced feelings of constant insecurity around my experiences with others in Salt River and what I considered to be potential work (the form of which was still largely unknown to me at the time) that could represent my own and others' positions and relations accurately.

In late 2012 my father passed away suddenly. I returned home to Durban from October through to January 2013 to assist in arranging his affairs and to be with my family. I dropped any allusion to complete my thesis by the February 2013 reregistration deadline. The compounded thesis frustration and emotional turmoil from the sudden loss emotionally broke me. On return to Cape Town I reregistered for a third year to complete my Masters by dissertation during the course of 2013. Having deeply bottled much of my grief, on my return to Cape Town I initially agreed with my supervisor to complete my thesis in a couple of months. The unresolved tension over what the form of the thesis ultimately resurfaced long-standing frustrations. Insecurities and uncertainties manifested in difficult emotional and mental ways alongside the bottled grief of loss: a sense of apathy had begun to develop around my work. By early March I made a decision to not submit a thesis in any form until I could find a way to understand and appreciate the work I had produced thus far and represent it in a form that I felt to be natural and representative of my experience. I decided to abandon long standing plans made prior to my father's death to teach abroad from May 2013 onwards; a decision that would have pressurised me to complete a thesis as quickly as possible. I refused to submit a thesis that was completed for the sake of it. In taking these steps was an acknowledgement that I needed to embark on an alternative path of personal development to find the insight, growth and resolution to inner turmoil around my work that I was not able to find as a full-time postgraduate student in my university department.

A mere week after making this decision an opportunity arose to work as intern for a prominent private-public funded organisation. The internship was to work on an open ended exploratory research project in the east of Cape Town city. Working with Andrew Putter, a Cape Town born public artist, I embarked on ethnographic work that consisted of spending days at a time in the

eastern part of Cape Town's city bowl. In conducting this work I made an effort to encounter as many people as possible; this meant having repeated conversations and building any form of possible relationship with those encountered. The internship period took everything I had started to learn and encounter (including all the tensions that had begun to surface) during my Masters fieldwork period and threw them back at me with ferocious intensity. Working regularly one-on-one particularly with people in the inner-city who experienced poverty in the most extreme forms forced intense lessons and unavoidable learnings upon me regularly. Tensions between being a researcher for an organisation and being a person finding their place in a world became the focus of tensions I was forced to work with daily. In making the decision to be completely open with the people I worked with on the street it however became a tension I slowly adjusted to and began to find comfort in its uneasiness. I had begun to develop a research style that held true to my values. In working so closely with Putter I found the mentor I had desperately longed for since becoming a post-graduate student. In between bouts of our own individual work on the streets, usually involving criss-crossing each other in our explorations of the social world of the east city, we engaged in periods of open discussion. These became short, intense but regular periods of information dumping where we began to figure each other out through unknowingly becoming reflexive mirrors for each other's work. In being reflexive we openly and without judgement or hostility engaged critically about work and personal feelings around our actions in conducting research and interventions. This process enabled a dialogue to help each other find better ways to articulate these emerging insights within ourselves and to each other. Reflexivity became a process of truly learning about my own identity and subjectivities through constant interrogation by people I regularly conversed with on the street and those I worked with. I began to locate aspects of myself that were being affected in particular ways by particular people and experiences, finding in turn the channels through which I could articulate and understand how and why I had experienced or encountered something or someone. It helped considerably that the work I was expected to produce for my employer organisation under the collaborative mentorship of Putter essentially amounted to a collection of my encounters as experienced from my position. It was honest, aimless work produced from a specific position that was seen as valuable. Through working as a researcher outside of the academy in pragmatic and a very hands-on way I began to find solace in myself and the connections I was making with ever-changing faces in the east city. I began to see the internship period as an affirmation for the fieldwork experience I had during Masters.

2.7: Bargaining with self and finding an emerging resolution

I had begun to understand that fieldwork was a first step along a process of learning; a process I could not fathom without the broader experience I was gaining in the east city. I was confidently putting into practice forms of methodologies that came naturally to me: deep engagements with people over long periods of time, slowly building relationships with people, discovering who I was through these relationships and in turn being open with people about who I was. This method process enabled me to begin to unfold a broader backdrop that gave context to the relations I was experiencing. Working alongside a colleague and mentor ensured I was constantly challenged if I was pushing a predesigned problem or imposing a pre-structured solution upon the relationships and connections I was observing and in the middle of. Rather than constructing and imposing a problematic from a “researcher” position I was encouraged to work in a way that would theorise research as processes that could account for multiple potential futures and outcomes between people. It was work that also took great strides to not assume structures, identities, etc. and took value in a perspective that could constantly account for the unknown; acknowledging that the complete landscape of interactions, experiences and outcomes between actors may never be known from my position alone. Without this experience I would have ultimately gone down a very different path for this thesis – a path where these valuable insights were not gained. The dissertation that I would have ultimately produced would have assigned (from the privileged position of a “researcher” rather than a complex actor) a problematic and assumptions over the subject positions of the people I encountered. The previous drafts of this dissertation I have produced prior to my experience outside of the life of an academy research student are rife with these assumptions; assumptions that overly valued ordered snippets of conversations as rational data.

I do not intend to create binary poles between my experience between work in Salt River as a postgraduate student and the present work I engage in outside of the academy. What I am commenting on however is that in current work I have found a means to come into conversation with my past experiences. In doing so I have been able produce a research environment that provides me with the time and experience to develop as a person and a researcher in unison. In having found the right form of mentorship I have been able to foster a reflexive process informed by my own experience and style of working. It is a form of reflexivity that has allowed me to find processes that begin to be cognisant of my own positions and to acknowledge the ways in which I understand the world through these positions. The decision I made to put my dissertation writing on

hiatus set in motion the right conditions that at the time were needed to find closure with the dissertation. It also redefined my thesis as a process and not as a single document output. With this mind-set change I found the confidence to further develop and be proud of a core set of values and ethos borne from my own experience and style of working. With this confidence I found I was able to begin trusting myself in my own being and work. This was ultimately the confidence I needed to be deeply reflexive, secure in myself to be open to be affect and be affected by those I encountered. This same confidence allowed me to be open, to actualise and be cognisant of how I am reconstituted by the world around me; not just as a researcher but as a person holding multiple subject positions. It was from this learning that the central thrust of this thesis emerges: I realised that my position as a researcher was constantly being reconstituted by the deep changes I was experiencing personally. The work I engage in and the writing I produce is representative of this process. It is work that affects me, reconstitutes me and brings me into new relations with difference while bringing the outside and the different into relation with me. It was in trying to understand this unknowable and ever morphing tension filled relationship that I came into contact with introductory literatures (Goodchild 1996; Massumi 2002) to Deleuze and Guattari. The writings I encountered provided the broad brush stroke theorisations that I longed for. It began to provide a core understanding of the multiplicity of experience and self that I immediately could relate to; with what I was reading I could relate and contextualise my own Masters experience. In having located a literature that resonated with and represented the core essence of my thesis I found renewed love and relevancy in academic literature. Literatures that previously seemingly only had purpose in confusing and frustrating my position and work were rediscovered to be important pieces of contextualising material that gave form to experiences on the street. I developed new found love for the works of Gillian Rose (1995, 1997, 2003, 2012), Nagar (2002, 2006), Nigel Thrift (2008) and Deborah Massey (1994, 1995, 2004, 2005). These are works that at their most fundamental level are concerned with the shifting, recursive nature of actors and their relations. It is little wonder why I was constantly despondent and uncertain with my work and exacerbated by literature I encountered: it is only through a deeply personal understanding of my own production of self, and the process this production ultimately creates, that I have been able to construct a relatable context for this literature.

2.8: Finding acceptance within self

Through developing a reflexive process in personal and positional situated ways an understanding of processes and networks of relations between me and The Locomotive Hotel that are otherwise intangible and subjective - virtual and shapeless in their very nature - were brought to the surface and through coming to terms with my own position and affect could begin to find form and be actualised. As I headed towards a period of dedicated writing for this dissertation I realised I was not objectively detached from the networks of relations that people who I encountered virtually construct. An understanding of these very networks emerged because of a specific context I was placed in and formed through a situated position that I hold. With this insight I feel that this dissertation can provide a renewed and reconstituted analysis of the relationships that exist within my experiences with the hotel. The relations I hold and have attempted to outline in this chapter demonstrate an unfolding of how the past is in constant recursive dialogue with the present; much like the relations of the hotel allowing actors to form connections at present and unconsciously inform the ways they rehearse potential futures through experiences and imaginings of the past. My own research experience is bound to the very phenomena I theorise. With the context provided above it is little surprise that the aim and objectives of this thesis have constantly shifted throughout the course of this thesis. In producing earlier drafts of a dissertation I lacked the reflexive capacity and experience to account for my narrative. By the very nature of the work represented within this dissertation, an aim emerges from the research context of me in relation to The Locomotive and its patrons: to demonstrate a recursive process embedded within specific contexts that enable an understanding of the relationship between self and the world as a researcher. This relationship does not exist as an observable set of phenomena that can be removed from its context: it is embedded, it is unknowingly vast and it is ever changing. It is a relationship in which I am situated at many different positions, through each position I affect and in turn affected by the world I observe and participate in. This chapter has demonstrated a narrative of a personal process of discovering research that can be realised as an embodiment of the relations held within one's self and in turn the way these relations are experienced between this self and others. Research becomes a process of self-growth with the ever-becoming past providing the preconditions for learning for the emerging present. The present in turn provides the reflexive capacity that elucidates tensions, frictions, encounters and affects experiences that were not necessarily fully comprehended in the past. In this sense, borne from my own experience, I feel that research is a recursive set of relations; a set of experiences cyclically reflecting on itself between the unsettled past and present.

Now, leading to the three year point marking the beginning of this dissertation process I present work in a form that could only have been produced as a result of the process I have discussed. It is formed by and represents the culmination of learnings of self and the world from experience that exists beyond what could perhaps be considered as a traditional fieldwork period for a Masters dissertation. Through the method described in this chapter, there is now an actualisation of something that has existed as muddled and uncertain potential in an unrealised virtual realm for far too long, awaiting the right conditions to be actualised and become. In writing this document and in particular this chapter, I can begin to outline a thesis in relation to self: conversations through which I can begin articulate me and The Locomotive Hotel across to others. It is a conversation held through a dissertation that can begin to articulate new forms of interrogation of self that can continue beyond this document. The last part of my method, the last part of the process for this dissertation document, is now writing from a specific moment of this thesis. Having gone through the process, the highlights of which I have described in this chapter, I now have the insight and the right sort of language to begin to articulate and converse on a still developing research journey. My experiences, insights, frustrations, emotions, self-doubts, position and ability to affect and be affected are my methodology for this journey or process; without this method, this dissertation would not exist.

CHAPTER 3: Literature review

3.1: Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined a process of my own internal negotiation between self and research. The discussion chapters to follow demonstrate how this same tension exists within all actors and is constantly reproduced every day in places like the Locomotive Hotel and beyond. It is a tension that begins to surface when actors encounter difference represented by others and are forced to begin to comprehend the connections being across this difference. This is an internal dialogue and process that all actors employ to deliberately and unknowingly understand and affect the world around them. The research process spoken of so far in this thesis and the “on the ground” phenomena of Salt River and the hotels are one in the same. They exist as different scales, seemingly removed contexts and different positions yet exist within one another. The arguments I make throughout this dissertation do not exist in a vacuum. Theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari (1977, 1987) have long written of interpersonal dynamics between actors. The arguments and analyses throughout this document draw inspiration from *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) in particular. The writings of this text opened up several trajectories of thought I had not encountered before. It is thought that has acted as a nexus through which other bodies of literature I had previously encountered could be interrogated and given assistance in contextualising against my own experience in the world. These channels of thought I have co-opted from *A Thousand Plateaus* include concepts of: multiplicity; encountering difference; becoming through encounters; of thinking of networks and assemblages of potential and actual encounter; interactions, affect and conversations as networks of assemblages; a rhizome-like structure of knowing rather than bifurcated binary based assumptions and the notion of a self being constructed through continuously expanding networks of potential, finding structure and form through the high tension period of continuously encountering and being affected by crowds of difference and sameness. In using *A Thousand Plateaus* much of what this thesis explores in emerging and incomplete ways draws from the narratives in *One or Several Wolves* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Each of the concepts introduced there and expanded in different configurations throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* has inspired thought in this thesis.

More relatively recent literatures since - particularly from the field of human and cultural geography where my graduate research background lies - have relations with this thought from Deleuze and Guattari. I feel that several bodies of literature represent this reflection: Massey's conceptualisation of *space and place* and *local and global* relationships (1994, 1995, 2004, 2005); theories of non-representation in cultural geography argued by academics such as Thrift (2008) and Latham and McCormack (2004); research into popular memory (Field and Swanson 2007) that explores imagination and the use of empathy to bring actors to encounter each other's memories in relation to their own; literatures exploring the trajectory of African urban modernity (Simone 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010; Mbembe and Nuttall 2004, 2008); key methodological literature in geography on reflexivity (Rose 1997; Nagar 2002, 2006). These are all writings and discussions that in some way in the context of this dissertation share foundational aspects (deliberately or not) from the non-rationalist and non-realist writings of Deleuze and Guattari that are worked with to support this thesis. Throughout my thesis I have pulled on these listed literatures time and time again for different sources of inspiration. Inspiration in times of desperation to understand and contextualise what I was being affected by and affecting during fieldwork in Salt River. These literatures seemed disparate in the past. In previous attempts at literature reviews I was unable to conceptualise a body of literature that my thesis contributed towards; I was unsure of what the golden narrative thread was that kept these literatures so spiritually close to my work. Now with a developed sense of experience and reflexivity (given a sense of support from having encountered Deleuze and Guattari) a threading narrative between these literatures can be established.

The literatures already outlined are a selection of texts and thinking that I have come across so far in that I feel can begin to demonstrate the relationship between self, difference and the surrounding world in a manner I find relevant and pertinent to my experience. This selection of texts and thinking in this review may seem limited and not as exhaustive as possible. This chapter represents but a current snapshot of thinking in a process represented as a written piece; it is incomplete for the sake of delivering a coherent and focused set of discussions. This chapter represents a literature selection that, across three years, I found particularly pertinent in relation to my experience with this thesis and the essence of what this thesis attempts to demonstrate. In once again looking back through these seemingly disparate literatures in conjunction with each other (now with experience and confidence), central common key threads emerge that I feel begin to surface the central thrust of this thesis. It is a body of literature when examined in the context of this thesis provides the theoretical context to address the aim of this thesis: to demonstrate how inexplicably bound the

experience of the actor is to the production of their selves and their relations to the world; understanding how the experience of a researcher as an actor amongst many is bound to the production of interpersonal based research. In terms of their theoretical bearing on this thesis, the ability of the literatures briefly reviewed herein masterfully demonstrate an ability to account for relationships that are directed towards actors in specific contexts and also calling into question the situated positions of the researcher. On multiple levels these literatures can provide insightful processes; it demonstrates an understanding that research is an exploration of the world through the situated positionality and reflexivity of actors and the researcher.

In this literature review and more broadly in the dissertation I make no attempt at demonstrating a mastery of literatures such *A Thousand Plateaus*. I do not possess the experience or aptitude at present to fully comprehend these literatures to the degree that they deserve. This is also true for the supporting literatures I will use to provide additional aspects of thought in this chapter. In this literature review I have taken concepts as I have understood them based in my experience and process. Using these literatures I will convey how I have understood key concepts and thinking around the relationship between self and other and the resultant process of reconstituting one's self (whether it is in terms of place, popular memory and belonging) through encountering difference. The relationship between this review of thought and the discussion chapters to follow anchor my own arguably limited case study material down with some degree of theoretical rigor. The nature of *A Thousand Plateaus* fortunately allows for this: Massumi (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) explains in the translator's introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* that each concept, grouping of concepts, ideas, chapters, plateau or whatever useful identifiable element the reader makes from the text can be read, rethought, reformed and applied in different configurations and content forms that are relevant to the reader's own contexts. I have done much the same in this literature review and this thesis. I understand *A Thousand Plateaus* as a thought and theory toolbox providing approaches to understanding the relationship between experience in the world and theoretical abstractionism. It provides a set of thought approaches that can repurposed and applied to the relationship between my various contextualising experiences in Salt River and Cape Town and the theory I engage with to form a conversation between experience and thought. The text is designed to be deconstructed and used in ever expanding, multiple ways.

3.2: Of being, sensing place and imagining

A Thousand Plateaus enables a form of becoming in its reader; in engaging with the text abstract hooks are offered that challenge the reader to find themselves in relation to the world and the processes they are currently going through. It offers a series of thought provocations that begin to provide an outline for potential insights and becomings to manifest within the reader. In terms of a notion of a becoming in relation to self and others, highlighted particularly in *One or Several Wolves* (1987), I began to understand my role as a research student. In reviewing this work through my own positions; I as a researcher entering “the field” is but one of many positions held within me. This position is not pure and it is not absolute. It is a position shaped by shifting subjectivities that are in a constant productive relation against actors that I have encountered or have not encountered. It is a shifting within my unconscious from virtual connections that were made years prior, made only today or has yet to be realised. To be a researcher is not to hold an objective position; it is to be one of many actors within oneself and in the world constituted of self but also outside of self. Research then is similarly not a contained, delineated and framed experience. Research is synonymous with finding one’s self in relation to the world. It is a demonstrable, actualised articulation of a process of becoming in relation to a specific context. In encounters with others what is important is not only what is physically uttered but the relations that are foundational to that utterance. The words spoken between actor and researcher do not emerge from a vacuum. The presence of the researcher in relation to the actor, the unconscious, emotional and cognitive affect that each have on one another, the subjectivities being articulated and the subjectivities being suppressed all account for the choice of words of spoken and the specific ideas conveyed to others. It is a set of relations that are perhaps non-representational; impossible for a single actor to fully comprehend and decipher. This is because of its virtual nature; of that which cannot necessarily be articulated or represented. What the spoken word of a conversation provides is a snapshot of the surface relations between actors, what exists virtually is far more multiple, networked and unknowable at all times to all actors. Although I have discussed the quintessence of my taking from *A Thousand Plateaus* in terms of one of my own situated position, that of a researcher, this same discussion could be applied to any actor.

The conceptualisation by Massey (1994, 1995, 2004, 2005) of the relationship between *place and space* and *global and local* is reflective of these concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus*. At one of its essences, Massey’s argument for place is of the non-linear and experiential nature of relations that

construct place. The relationship between place and space is not based on linear, singular trajectories from past to present; rather place is constantly reconstituted in relation to itself. Place is recursive in its reconstituted nature; it is not a single entity but rather a set of changing relations that exist between actors. Notions of a nostalgic, linear sense of place that may exist are fundamentally more complex in their nature; remembering place in terms of nostalgia provides only a superficial snapshot moment of relations at play between actors. What this snapshot fails to contextualise is how the interactions and encounters between actors is ever changing, shifting and growing to account for an imagining or snapshot notion of a pure sense of place. What is thought to be actual is actually only a sliver of what is formative in the virtual.

Massey challenges the notion that place can be thought of as what is included and what is meaningful to actors with space being constituted as everything beyond these implicated relations. Through her various works focused specifically on place (1994, 1995, 2004, 2005) Massey argues that space is of place; that binary impositions made in terms of physical framing have the potential to ignore the invisible and nuanced connections that exist between actors that are not always surfaced. In this argument there is no singular entity of place that can be defined separately from space; rather there are virtual networks of actors holding varying and multiple notions of community and senses of place, overlapping and interrelating across space and time. Through this same line of thought, the distinction between global and local is also an artificial binary; in the relations between actors the global is always implicated in the local and the local is implicated in the global. They are of each other, reflected in each other across scales. This thought of the being of place has strong parallels with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) discussion in *One or Several Wolves* regarding the nature of self and difference as understood in terms of crowds. In this parallel to Massey there is no sense of a pure identity: self must be understood as being infinitely recursive, perpetually changing as it is pulled into different tension filled relations from multiple directions and sources of difference. Because of this infinitely recursive nature it is impossible to identify a state of self or place being "pure"; the nature of self and place/space relations is through being continuously reconstituted in encounters with difference and with otherness both externally and within one's own self and sense of place. A pure distinction between self/place and other as whole entities is thus artificial; it excludes the understanding of self and other are elements of self and of other actors, elements that are constitute of each other and always implicated in each other.

Locally situated literatures from Cape Town that have worked with popular memory and imagining the city as a series of interconnected yet different places provide similar reflection on Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Sean Field (Field 2001, 2007) and a collection of other authors (Mceachern 1998; Field and Swanson 2007; Geschier 2007; Masade 2007; Meyer 2007) explore the intersection of popular memory, imagining, nostalgia and empathy across different actors and positions in the context of District Six, Langa and broader Cape Town. In exploring these sites of memories the literatures commonly question if it is possible to bring people into encounter with one another and to have conversation despite their entrenched differences in history and memory. In terms of sites of popular memory that may bring people into engagement despite these different and often conflicting notions of memory, authors (Field 2007; Geschier 2007) argue that what is essential in conceptualising the possibility of shared memory between people is not the promotion of actualised sustained engagement and conversation at present but rather questioning what fleeting encounters may produce further down the line. Having people with different notions of memory, belonging and forms of attachment to a place together in a shared site that has common relevance may provide a pretext to begin these encounters. It is a pretext that can afford to bring people into relation with one another in multiple and not necessarily comfortable ways; they may be contentious, emotional and tension filled conversations and encounters. Through bringing actors into contact in a shared space, mediating multiple memories and relevance can begin building emotional and unconscious virtual connections between two otherwise irreconcilable differences. These differences may still be too stark to actualise a potential connection at present but in developing conversation and sites of shared memory pretexts can be established. These pretexts can act as foundations for potential future connections to be realised and forms of potential empathy to emerge.

Writings on African cityness can assist in further teasing out some of these and assist in anchoring how this dissertation can contribute towards a specific niche body of knowledge. Nuttall's (2008) work on the literary city is particularly pertinent. Nuttall's work begins to tease out how social relations and forms of sociability held within a self yet also present between self and others come to define the experience of the city. They are relations that shape identity, race, class, belonging and place. This work by Nuttall further supports the arguments by Massey and memory literature explored here; additionally it gives broader context and provides parallels to this thesis. Nuttall describes different experiences of the city between several different groups that are seemingly far removed from each other. It is work that argues for potential relations that can be fostered between these different groups; building the potential for groups to reconstitute one another in ways that are

not necessarily comfortable but are always productive. This argument contextualises these tensions through a particular literary figure's experiences in Hillbrow. It is a narrated experience centred on a fear of loss of place and belonging in Hillbrow coupled with feelings of irrelevance as the social, cultural, economic and political landscape of the area begins to shift in context of broader post-apartheid era changes. The figure begins to feel marginalised and increasingly invisible in a place that was once familiar to him. In contrast the forms of sociability once invisible and excluded in his imagining of Hillbrow now becomes increasingly visible, relevant and at the core of the area's identity. The trauma and sense of loss caused by these changes leads to resentment towards the forms of heterogeneity rapidly emerging in Hillbrow; it is the new social forms borne from heterogeneity that is targeted by the figure as having broken apart all that was once recognisable and familiar. To encounter this difference and to come to terms with this heterogeneity may be too may be too irreconcilable for the figure. It may be a shift that is too sudden to comprehend and actualise on. The loss of place and comfortable familiarity for the figure leads to a creation of a singular, delineated identity reinforced by nostalgic rememberings of what once was; a coping mechanism to retain some semblance of a "pure" self in ever changing and uncertain surroundings. It is a mechanism to reinforce certain subject positions that are known to represent one's self, a sense of belonging and a sense of place perceived to be real and based in experience. This nostalgia driven notion of identity, place and experience never quite existed; it is an attempt to retain some semblance of self in the face of changes that are far beyond the limits of an actor's experience and position. It is through a forcing element; an uncomfortable and uneasy experience, that such a figure can be pulled into some form of relation with difference that they had tried to divorce themselves from. In encountering difference that was once despised there is potential for the figure to reconstitute his self (his corporeal experiences of the space around him, his perceptions of race and class, his imagining of what Hillbrow and Johannesburg should be, what he deems to be reality, etc.) based on new, uncomfortable encounters. It is potential that begins to create new possibilities for the figure to find relevance and meaning in the social, cultural and economic relations that now begin to reshape Hillbrow. This is not to say that the figure has completely changed in line what he imagines Hillbrow to currently be along with the figuring of a crowd in his unconscious. By the end of Nuttall's analysis of the literary work containing this figure there is rather an internal realisation of how the self is reconstituted by encountering difference and, upon reflection that this difference exists in some way, is reflected back on one's self. It is a realisation that there is no pure, constant notion of self and place; it is in constant flux. In the context of this argument, reflexivity and self-insight is something that is triggered. It is a triggering that forces an actor that imagines themselves as closed off from their surroundings to come into relations with their surroundings and within

themselves. The triggering moment or the forcing element that is required takes on the form of something uncomfortable and filled with tension. It is something that takes actor over the edge and to be brought into relations they may have tried to avoid to be closed off from due to a perception that it is too different. Although the forcing may not immediately induce sustained relations it creates new potentials, new unconscious and virtual connections to perhaps be realised down the line.

3.3: Method and epistemology related literature

Returning to methodological texts with experience and an understanding of my own reflexive process helped assisted in applying the epistemological arguments of the literature to my own contexts from the time spent as a full-time research student. This experience helped to appreciate and reconsider the implications of writings from Rose (1995, 1997, 2003, 2012), Nagar (2002, 2006), Latham and McCormack (2004) and Thrift (2008). In using this literature to further repurpose *A Thousand Plateaus* in the context of my own work has meant to seriously consider the position of a researcher away from an assumption of the research position as being an objective agent who is able to neatly negotiate the insider-outsider position he holds in the *field* and with *subjects*. Rather the researcher is a person who, through being thoughtful and insightful of the relations they find themselves within, is encouraged to understand the extent of the connections between the actors that he is but one of; not as a rational insider and outsider but an actor engaging, affecting and shaping the world she encounters. In encountering others in “the field”; the snippets of what researchers hear, record and prize as objective data cannot possibly ever be representative of that person (Binder et al., 2010). In these often over-valued conversations what is often overlooked is how the unfolding of the conversation took place and the importance given and taken from the dialogue is a reflection of the researcher and their affect. What researchers pick up on, place importance upon, the engagement they have with people is highly positional. Conversations and encounters are not just an objective source of data from an interviewed research subject. An encounter or a conversation resonates with researchers for certain reasons; this affect exists beyond the actuality of the words spoken. The words are not the important part of the encounter; the way in which researcher and actor affected each other and came into relation rather is what should be valued and further engaged with in research (Binder et al., 2010). The “field” therefore can be conceived as multiple worlds of experience; a set of encounters and conversations that a particular

understanding can begin to emerge through certain held positions beyond what is only spoken and typically recorded as notes. Research produced through encounters and relations with the world is not pure and it is not objective. It is not removed from the researcher rather it is research that is of the researcher, as a world and reality is of a person. This is an understanding of the researchers position not as objectively removed from the field but as a constitutive part of it. This is the essence of methods such as participative design and ethnography that are often glossed over; a fundamental ethical commitment to representation rooted in reflexivity (Rose 1995, Binder et al., 2010).

This is an acknowledgement that to engage with specific contexts in research is to affect and impact upon relations often unknown to the researcher (Rose 1997; Nagar 2002, 2006; Binder et al., 2010). It is through this acknowledgement that there is an encouragement to understand the extent of the connections between actors, including the researcher: the connections between people, ideas and things. In doing so a researcher can acknowledge that from their positions they may never fully understand the connections and relation they explore. As a researcher becomes increasingly reflexive of the world around them they should become more and more enticed by difference to further expand and make complex their assumptions (Rose 1997). With this acknowledgement they understand it requires infinitely expanding amounts of reflexivity beyond the capability and positionality of one person, it requires the coproduction of knowledge that begins to establish new relations to counter potential misrepresentation (Nagar 2002, 2006). To be a researcher is to be open and transparent about personal reflexive process and positionality, not because it becomes a check box for methodological integrity but because it becomes the very nature of research. It represents the very same processes of being an actor as explored in the previous section; of being shaped and shaping the world and having the reflexive capability to be aware of and be able to theorise the broader contexts of these relations. These are arguments that place importance in the *process* of research rather than a theoretical *output*. They are arguments that demonstrate the fallacy of a researcher as able to neatly and rationally describe their positional situated-ness as being on the outside of a group or crowd in one moment and inside the next. It is an argument for a form of ethnography and engaging with positionality that demonstrates the researcher as human, as unsure and fallible in their attempts to understand their place and relation to new contexts (Nagar 2002, Ross 2010). It is this process of finding this relation to the world that is interesting and productive research, it is nuanced research informed from shared experiences that can speak to broader contexts and scales (Ross 2010). It is ethnographic work that has an ethical and political commitment beyond ticking methodological checkboxes.

Shannon Walsh's (2008) work is particularly pertinent to this discussion; it examines the risk of how complex subjectivities between actors can be continuously reproduced and assumed to be linear and binary in nature. In the context of poverty-based research Walsh argues that the oversimplified relationship between researcher and subject reinforces a singular subjectivity on both sides - for the researcher and those researched - that cannot account for the diverse and manifold experiences and identities held within each actor's experience and between these experiences. There are power differentials perpetuated in these linear binaries of an objective and rational "researcher" and a pure research subject: in the context of Walsh's argument is the notion that the "poor" identity perpetuated by academics has a legitimised and *pure* struggle against a system in order to achieve political freedoms, service delivery and other civil society issues. This establishes an artificial hierarchy in which researchers are objectively removed from the interactions with other actors; rather figuring them as subjects, observing the battle lines drawn by the "poor" and providing legitimising support through a position that is also figured as *pure* through its objective, rational and realist position. Walsh bemoans such a conceptualisation, arguing that if we are to take seriously research that represents individuals and groups beyond simple binaries we need to begin surface and make complex the political positions held between ourselves; not just as researchers but as radically equal actors with profound implications on those who we interact with. This argument begins to conceptualise a horizontally structured nature of relations and encounters between actors. The relations within this flattened hierarchy can begin to account for the multiplicity of strategies, options and agency offered to actors across scales; ultimately providing a far more appropriate site for nuanced social-based research rather than the typically assumed vertical hierarchy of power differentials. The fear being that these hierarchies take away much of the agency and choice articulated in mundane ways by *all* actors, including the researcher. Over-simplified theoretical abstraction does not recognise the interpersonal; it removes a person from their agency and choice that drives their day to day (unconscious and conscious) choice of positions in different situated contexts. There is an implicit acknowledgement in Walsh's paper for researchers to similarly understand their own situated positions and relations with world; to be reflexive of their own affect on the world and people around them. In doing so we can begin to understand that although people's experiences differ (perhaps between a person who happens to be an academic and a person who happens to be economically marginal) parts of these perhaps disparate experiences can be brought into relation because of how in some way they may begin to resonate and speak with each other (Nagar 2006, Ross 2010). This is at first perhaps in ways unknown and unfamiliar to both actors. It is an emerging actualisation of relations that can be engaged with and made complex;

complex not from the privileged position of the researcher or from the “pure” position of being a struggling community and civic member, but rather in the acknowledgement of both groups existing as actors more complex than what either can assume.

3.4: Conclusion

These are tensions that the previous chapter of this dissertation has attempted to trace according to my own situated experience. It is because of this tension that I find this literature specifically dealing with methodological and epistemological challenges as contributing support towards the arguments I make in the chapters to follow. I hope it is a body of thought that this dissertation (and the future work that emerges from it) can contribute to in some form. In my Honours and early Masters years I had thoroughly read through the texts reviewed here. I understood the arrangement of words in articles on positionality and representation; I was convinced as a young research student that I could demonstrate these learnings through my own work. I had used in particular arguments by Rose (1997) and Nagar (2002, 2006) to justify my actually rather limited and superficial methodologies in my Honours thesis and Masters proposal. It was not until a few months ago in beginning to rewrite this dissertation that I have begun to form an emerging understanding of the extent of what these authors have written; of what positionality and reflexive processes mean. I feel that it is something that cannot be taught in a lecture, obtained through reading or represented fully in a relatively short Master’s dissertation. Much like how Pieterse argues in terms of citizenship (2005, 2013), reflexivity is a skill that needs to be learned and developed through experience and trial and error in a way that is relevant and pertinent to the context of a person. It is a practiced and actualised set of relations and understanding between a person and their place in the world; it is not innately present. Much like how a civil society activist develops the necessary skills through relevant and personal context to engage with the state and configurations of power, to do ethnographic research means much the same: it is actualising a reflexive process to engage with broader relations of identity and representation in terms of the relations between self and others.

It is through engaging with this literature in conjunction with exploring my own process in the methods chapter that I am able to reflect back on previous drafts of discussions that were overly rational and realist. This previous work placed an emphasis on the spoken word of conversations as

a source of primary data, attempting to uncover rational phenomena to posit through an objective position. Where these previous drafts treated this “data” as objective the discussion chapter to follow reflects back on these analyses and repurposes them. Using the thought outlined in this literature review this dissertation is afforded the opportunity to reflect back on older material and bring through an emerging understanding of the relations that inform the conversations, encounters and relations I had experienced. In reanalysing this work with the method process and this literature review I now understand my position as a being reconstituted and stimulated in conflicting ways while in The Locomotive. What I experienced and encountered was not the pure, objective spoken words of research subjects, it was of a relation being formed between myself and patrons I began to befriend. Following the nature of the texts and thought outlined in this literature review, this thesis has become less about an observable phenomenon and more about a story of how people (including myself) come into relation and affected by each other, placed in the context of conflicting and intersecting relations within The Locomotive Hotel. Through this literature review (and in conjunction with the methods chapter) I want to convey an understanding that conversation is an important process in the emergent forming of a becoming and - analogous to this thesis - doing research. Conversations are however not important solely because of the direct information - the surface content - that is imparted but rather how it provides the outline for virtual potentials that inform what can be actualised. It is a never ending conversation that is personal, external, recursive and reiterative in nature. Conversation is of actors always searching for a becoming as growing potentials between each other as they come into encounters. It is a never ending expansion and reconstitution of being. I argue through the literature presented in this review that it is at this fundamental level the same processes shape notions of place, belonging, memory and imaginings, consumption and research.

CHAPTER 4: First discussion – of relations from past to present in Salt River's hotels

4.1: Introduction

Through my time spent aimlessly wondering in Salt River, a period that I call Master's fieldwork, I drafted a set of writing based on my understanding of the experience at the time. This discussion is a retroactive analysis of this produced work. In using the process established in the methods chapter and the rediscovered relevance in certain literatures this discussion chapter will take arguments I have made previously and give new vigour to them; new insights and new discussion that reconstitute existing case study work. My experience in Salt River created virtual connections and emerging musings; potentials which I have been unable to fully articulate and realise. This discussion chapter will begin to actualise these ideas through a marriage of the past and present. Through my encounters with actors in Salt River I will discuss the relationship between the past and present in context of The Locomotive Hotel that I encountered from my position. An understanding of this relationship between past and present is a reflection of my own process as outlined in the methods chapter: as an actor with no prior actual experience of Salt River, no experience of the past, what I detail here is effectively a positional situated popular memory I have constructed of Salt River and the hotels through my encounters with patrons in my time spent at The Locomotive Hotel.

In the context of Salt River these encounters and interactions construct a virtual network or rhizome-like structure of potential affect between actors. The discussion to follow aims to investigate how this potential between actors unfolds and where it emerges from. This is understood from my positions as a researcher, a patron and a former Salt River resident amongst multiple other subjectivities. What is offered herein is one possible reading. This possible reading from my positions begins with a reading of the constant memorialisation of what seems to be a certain imagining of the past into the presence of the last remaining hotel in Salt River, The Locomotive. The existence of the hotel in its imagining, its physicality and its heritage has a connection to some sort of notion of the past in Salt River and the history of the hotels in the suburb. In the time I spent in Salt River it seemed (through surface level observations) that the patron demographic of The Locomotive was constituted not only of what I would initially have

regarded as old Salt River locals before I began to engage seriously with the hotel (typically middle-aged working class individuals who have either lived in Salt River sometime in their lives, work or have worked in the area for a lengthy amount of time, or individuals who have frequently visited Salt River for various reasons for years and are as familiar with the suburb as residents) but also of a younger mix of working and middle class patrons. These were patrons much like myself who would have been too young to have experienced the “same” heyday of the hotels in Salt River that is memorialised in the very physical structure of the hotel and by its older regular *locals* – a heyday that ran up to the decline of the most prominent hotel in the area in the early nineties, as embodied by the Junction Hotel. Yet these younger patrons were regarded as equal alongside what I had initially labelled as *locals* in the hotel. All more or less discussed the same popular memories, talked in common terms about the same sense of place and had a shared sense of belonging in relation to The Locomotive. The discussion for this chapter begins to depart at this superficial level, but helpful, starting point for inquiry. It is from this surface reading from my early visits to The Locomotive that I discuss the nature (as I experienced as a patron) of the conversations amongst all patrons between the past and present in the hotel. These conversations may have a ‘real’ element to them but the conversation I speak of is more virtual in nature; conversations in which actors are brought into relation with each other. These are relations that begin to amass unformed, unstructured potential based in different narratives, histories, imaginings, memories, etc. that come into contact within the hotel. Also discussed herein is how these relations are discussed and conversed between patrons as emerging actualisations in the present and, in their actualisation, are reiterative of the past in their very nature. This traces my conversation and experience with various patrons across different themes that emerged as important conversation topics; topics that in hindsight I could use begin to understand the relations held between patrons from past to present that are shift and reform each other. The themes (a few among many other potential themes) include the sociability around lunch time cultures, informality and illicit elements of Salt River, and dealing with hard realities of racism in the past and the repercussions of these relations in the hotel at present.

4.2: Sociability from past to present

This chapter will introduce a few key figures that will be present throughout the discussions to follow. Pete is a *local* patron I began to form a friendship with at my time in The Locomotive. He has resided in the neighbouring suburb of Woodstock for years and has been a regular to the hotels in

Salt River for the majority of his life. Pete is a key figure in The Locomotive, a patron who is regularly at the hotel most afternoons and is well known by old and new patrons alike. He has an innate ability to bring people who would not normally chat to each other into contact; his years as a patron at The Locomotive and his knowledge of most individuals who have frequented Salt River's hotels from past to present make him a central connection maker. I was brought into frequent contact with Pete and his cohort of regular patrons throughout my time at The Locomotive. Mrs Stewart and Uncle Rod are two former long-time employees of various hotels throughout Salt River; both individuals met each other through their long working tenure at the Junction Hotel that now sits empty and abandoned near Salt River's train station. Mrs Stewart and Uncle Rod were interviewed across the span of an afternoon; sharing their life stories centred on the hotels in Salt River. Although both formally retired now, both Rod and Mrs Stewart spent years continuing to work and operate in similar establishments in the Salt River-Observatory area after the closure of The Junction. Between them, their remarkable years of service in the hotel establishments in the suburb have ensured that they are still remembered by current Salt River residents and Locomotive patrons with links to the heyday of the hotels.

Time spent during the Master's research period in Salt River and The Locomotive if anything led to conversations and relation building with people. From these connections several beacons emerged that in some form demonstrated a relationship between the past and present. These were beacons that I began to relate to, find interest in and from my position I could proceed to inquire further into. My emerging interest in the relationship between the hotel place, consumption, life histories and narratives began to become more complex through the conversation with Uncle Rod and Mrs Stewart. During our day of sharing stories, many narratives centred on the people that would frequent the hotel in a figurative past and the relations that were present between these patrons.

"The Junction had a good lunch; it relied on the railroads nearby and the lives of the workers... We would cash the railway workers cheques at the hotel. I would make sure I would dress nicely and clean so I would get tips... You know, the bread and butter of those places are the guys who bought the half bottle *every day*. Those guys kept places going. In the morning, at 3 o'clock break time and at evenings. Black, coloured, whites. All of them would come. The rail yard police would never squeal on them, they would just turn their backs. It's *hard* work at the railway for these guys... At The Locomotive if brass fittings or whatever would break or needed to be fixed, they would weld it, make it, fix it."

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

The stories from Uncle Rod depicted an intimate relationship between the hotel and the workers in the area. The affordable lunches and the provision of alcohol through the hotels of old served as the basis for developing interactions that existed beyond this consumption of food and drink. Affordable food and drink ensured workers were well supplied; their presence almost guaranteed because of the service and relationship built not only with the institution of the hotel but the management and other diverse patrons. The relationship between the rail yard patrons and staff was beyond a formal business transaction between worker and the hotel's coffers. This was exemplified in the connection staff like Rod and Mrs Stewart had for the workers that made up the bulk of the patrons. The central industrial sites of the area, namely the Salt River rail and steel works where these workers came from, were diverse and varied in their social composition, including people working together across race in a period where racial divisions were harshly implemented (Worden et al., 1998, Bickford-Smith et al., 1999). The fondness of workers felt by staff was because of not only the business and financial support the workers brought in but also the distinct, mixed, working class atmosphere that accompanied their presence.

"Yeah we used to get very upper class guys from the banks, from Maitland, Tokai they would come through. Our speciality? The mixed dish! Tripe and chowder. The chef made his own pies with proper meat. It was a proper meal. You could never really finish it."

(Interview with Mrs Stewart: 19 August 2011)

With the support established by the *local* workers, Mrs Stewart told of how the affordable lunch time began to draw the 'upper class' workers associated with financial institutions throughout the Cape Town Southern Suburbs because of the affordability and quality of the meals.

Pete begins to tell me stories of how famous The Junction was, how everyone would go there, for its food and ambiance. He tells me of friends who would come from Tokai to get lunch every day without fail at The Junction. He tells me that these men were big banking men at the Old Mutual. I tell him I can't believe it. Pete proclaims loudly "Where else would you get lunch, steak and egg and chips for R7!? Spur, a steak and chips from there, was like R28, it wasn't even that cheap."

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

Some of these conversations included tales of railway yard workers coming into the hotel in large numbers to order lunch; the size of the portions that prompted these workers to bring their steel lunchboxes into the hotel to put their leftovers into. Bank managers from the main branches in the southern suburbs would eat the same meals in the same venue as these workers and the superb quality of the food - including meals such as large steak and chips that I was assured not even the

best family restaurants in Cape Town could rival in size and taste - and its affordability made it equally appealing to industrial workers and bank managers alike. These narratives and memories of the hotel place are punctuated by a lunch time culture that promoted connections between different groups fostered through the quantity, quality and affordability of food; a common denominator that could cut across difference. These two diverse communities of workers, gathered at the same space, and interacting with each other made hotels like The Junction unique places filled with distinct social interactions that could also ultimately be sustained as a profitable business. The lunch time tradition led to patrons developing other forms of relations within the hotel between patrons, the hotel itself and management. At the height of the apartheid (a hazy and unspecific period in which most the encountered memories of the hotel are based) the narrating of the hotel as a place where people across races were brought into contact is significant: it provided an opportunity for rare connection making on more or less equal terms between actors that would otherwise be illegal and near impossible.

“The Junction was a good business; the people who have come through were passing trade... It was a meeting place for Salt River, for whites and non-whites... People would come in, have a dop, have lunch. People would feel at ease.”

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

In the process of becoming familiar with The Locomotive, its patrons and gaining some understanding of the contexts that brought people together, I began increasingly to ask specifically of the older hotels in the area including the infamous Junction Hotel. This opened conversation between patrons in The Locomotive around the commonly remembered popular memories and stories. The telling of these stories of the old hotels from past to present were built on bit by bit by not only the older patrons but also younger patrons and bar staff. Younger patrons and staff were aware of these figures and events from their encounters and conversations with other patrons, friends and family in the area. In remembering people and events of the hotel in the past in broad brushstroke narratives of the hotels and the suburb the centrality of the lunch times spent at the hotels was brought forward.

...everyone in the bar and the couches behind begin to discuss hurriedly the food and the price and the portions that were given, describing it amongst themselves as platefuls for far cheaper than any other place around... someone suddenly shouts out a comment about the old bartender with straight white hair who got stabbed in front of the bar. “No man, it was behind the bar!” interjects Keith. The patrons talk about some of the regulars and the staff, including the one armed bartender and his V8 muscle car he used to drive with one arm; “with his left

hand drive manual” Keith’s friend haughtily shouts out. Pete’s friend tells me about how they used to watch him fly past and nearly cause accidents.

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

The constant conversations and interactions between these diverse actors has resulted in different imaginings of popular memory, of place and belonging being dissected and actively discussed, even amongst those that may have never experienced these narratives. This lack of “real” experience is ultimately inconsequential; newer patrons such as me are likely to have already developed an imagined sense of the relations that occurred in the past, an imagining shaped from my position of the stories and relations of the past I had encountered in a short time of frequenting The Locomotive.

The significance of the legacy of memory around lunch time at The Junction and community is apparent in Pete’s comparison of food in the hotels and food in the suburb at present. Patrons conversed how they thought the value for price from restaurants today isn’t comparable to The Junction and the other hotels in the past. Comments were made that it is rare to get value for money (quantity and quality) and that the high price of food in these spaces exclude most people from accessing it.

Pete explains how everyone goes into the Old Biscuit Mill to look at things or buy food but they often come out with nothing or will rarely buy food when visiting. Because of this Pete explains that there’s no real money being made there as the only people who can spend money there are the yuppies... Pete nods and agrees, and tells me how the old pubs and hotels that sold cheap food that anyone in the community could afford not being around anymore, that these places that were once there for the locals and for the community just don’t exist anymore.

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

Pete’s attitude towards upper-class restaurants and markets that have opened in the area was that people may go these places to look around, perhaps purchase something small to eat or drink but will not be further involved in the space beyond that. This is in opposition to what is narrated by the patrons I encountered as being the legacy and the essence of the hotel experience: affordable, good quality food that generated community across diverse social-economic backgrounds because of its accessibility. The consumptive culture in new hotel developments, lifestyle markets and up-market restaurants were felt to lie in contrast to this; unable to promote a sustainable community through accessible consumption that would bring diverse people together into relation. Rather it was felt

that only those who could afford the food would be the ones brought into connection with one another; a relatively narrow and homogenous group of actors compared to those brought into relation with one another in The Locomotive in the past and present. Pete, for example, referred to the lack of affordability of food for the 'average' person at these places as being inherently unsustainable. I understood it as being unsustainable in nature through the relations Pete and other patrons had described concerning what the role food and drink should serve: to bring 'everyday' people into conversation. With this thought, The Old Biscuit Mill and other places in the suburb that sell expensive yet unsubstantial food, are not regarded as a place Pete can relate to. They are differentiated from what the hotels represented in the past and what patrons at The Locomotive still try to represent at present. Through different but connected understandings of the relations that have shaped the hotel from past to present, patrons (both old and new) perceive newer, expensive establishments to not produce the same notion of community and place.

4.3: Relations of informality and illicit activities

Despite significant political and social tensions focused on race and associated informal and illicit activities in the past, the hotels managed to mediate these relations between people. The consumption of food and drink provided the pretext through which relations between actors could be negotiated and created across difference. Uncle Rod and Mrs Stewart narrated however that people on the margins of the hotels had indirect or more informal connections with hotel staff and patrons. Although on the margins, the informal and the illicit were pulled into the hotel and contributed towards developing a sense of place and popular memory.

"We knew all the *skollies* in the area, but they kept their business to themselves. Yes, it was a close community... Mr Lipchitz [one of The Junction Hotel's owners] went through the wars there. I don't know how he managed; he couldn't get his way out of a paper bag. But he spoilt me. There were tears, laughter and good atmosphere."

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

"Ja, we knew the area well, we knew all the *skollies*. When I go through now they all go 'hello ma!' ... Maurice, Topper, they were harmless. Whitey had his regulars by the vegetable stands. They were *skollies*. Even Hector, he was a runner for us... Whitey James, Pert, Grey. We knew the pickpockets. They had turned the bar upside down before."

(Interview with Mrs Stewart: 19 August 2011)

Rod and Mrs Stewart recounted many stories of the *skollies* or small time criminals that were remembered as loitering throughout Salt River and specifically around the outside walls of the hotel. This petty criminal element were not involved in the hotel as patrons in the same way as rail yard workers and business people yet they were still regarded by hotel staff and patrons alike as an integral part of the hotel culture. Their day to day interactions with patrons and staff alike was narrated as having contributed towards a sense of belonging and place to the hotel. Although not patrons, at present these actors were deemed to be part of what constituted the hotel; this was regardless of the race, social standing and activities of the local *skollies*.

“They were good days. At the bar the bartender ruled. But there were times like the passageway out of the bar room, there were those sad times too... There was a commotion outside, and we got told to stay inside. A boy, he worked for us, he stood in the doorway. There were two big gangs in Salt River; the Fenton Road Pirates and on London Road the Stuppies Road Gang. These youngsters were having a fight and before we could run to see what was going on they stabbed this guy three times, like a knife through jelly... Please don’t say anything bad about the area and the people. There were *skollies* but we were all family. We were all one at that time. Some of us had some life threatening experiences but we laughed it off.”

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

Despite the realities of criminal activities violence that were associated with such *skollies*, the group were regarded as being ultimately good but flawed people; kind hearted and never malicious despite their criminal activity that upon reflection was understood by Mrs Stewart as the realities of survival. It was a survival that was supported by the hotel staff and patrons; small jobs by the back doors of the hotel offered by staff and occasional opportunities from patrons offering opportunities for respectability and a place in a community. It is these relationships of respectability between otherwise criminal elements with actors within the hotel that has allowed *skollies* to be narrated at present as part of the relations of the hotel. This acknowledgement of the relations from Mrs Stewart and Uncle Rod come despite harsh realities around the criminal element. Despite a fondness for *skollies*, the violent moments that also shaped the hotel were not forgotten or veiled but acknowledged alongside the everyday good.

Other relationships with illicit parts of Salt River’s society that were remembered included dealings made between the hotel and local *shebeen* taverns. The often undercover and somewhat illicit

dealings made with the taverns to supply alcohol during strict apartheid liquor regulation were thought of by Rod as having expanded out the relations of the hotel beyond its own boundaries. This relationship between the hotel and taverns was not just a business transaction, Rod and Mrs Stewart explained that over time they became familiar with the various tavern owners throughout the area. Mrs Stewart described that her presence in these interactions as a young, White woman joining in trips to taverns to deliver alcohol during the height of apartheid was as risky. She thought of these runs not as risky for safety reasons but for the increased likelihood of imprisonment because the implied actions of her identity as a young, white woman visiting illegal, African drinking houses. Mrs Stewart describes having proudly disregarded this risk in order to be involved in the hotel's expanding relations beyond its own physical boundaries. This included regular interactions and forming affable relationships with the owners and patrons of various *shebeen* taverns. In contrast to these informal and illicit dealings the hotel management and staff had to create and maintain connections with formal, regulatory bodies that could jeopardise the operations of the hotel and by extension the relations radiating from it. These connections were in the form of weekly interactions with police officers to inspect alcohol quantity records as required by the law at the time. Mrs Stewart explained that they would have to constantly keep records of the amount of alcohol sold and used down to the millilitre in order to not be heavily fined and investigated. This book keeping was accompanied with mad rushes and infighting between staff; in particular between her and Uncle Rod, to ensure all liquor could be accounted for in preparation for an inspection. Rod and Mrs Stewart explained that a strategy employed by management was to expect and prepare visits from sergeants or heads of the local police department ahead of time. Generous 'offerings' and gifts of good quality liquor could then be given on a regular basis to improve relationships with police officials; the hope was that these informal relations with officials would help in having irregularities with liquor record - as a result of the illicit dealings with taverns - overlooked. The laboured process of accounting for alcohol with staff and the dealings with official figures became part of the day-to-day routine of the hotel, contributing to developing relationships between staff members within the hotel and connections between the hotel and official bodies over the consumption of alcohol that would ultimately ensure the continued operation of the hotel.

"There was no colour with them. They [hotel patrons and staff] even knew the *skollies*, they were all friends. If the guys stopped them for cigarettes and change they would give it to them."

(Interview with Mrs Stewart: 19 August 2011)

The illicit and formal relations demonstrate the messy nature that formed the place of the hotel. Although *skollies* were on the physical 'outside' of the hotel, they were thought of as part of the hotel culture and interacted with, even sometimes employed by the hotel. Despite the illegality of interactions with *shebeen* taverns, the way in which the business interactions between the hotel and taverns was managed followed formal business practice, with regular deliveries using hotel delivery vehicles and social relations maintained with *shebeen* tavern owners. In contrast to this, in the regulated, controlled and formal relationship between the hotel and the police, managers and staff still found ways to form relationships with police figures with power, arguably illicit favours and gifts given to lubricate relationships with these formal figures.

These relations between informality and the hotel have extended through to present. The presence of *shebeens* and informal taverns in Salt River is still a discussion point amongst patrons. For Pete's group of close friends at The Locomotive, going to a nearby *shebeen* is not a secretive act. Patrons described the norm of going to these *shebeens* because it offers a different atmosphere and opportunities to engage with other acquaintances and connections that may not often be seen at The Locomotive. For hotel patrons, frequenting a *shebeen* is not removed from a sense of belonging at The Locomotive; patronage at the two establishments is seemingly mutual. The nature of *shebeens* has also become quite different from the past. *Shebeens* as a fit-all label for informal and illicit taverns is no longer relevant with many taverns found throughout Salt River operating formally with liquor licenses. Despite the more formal nature of *shebeens* at present, there are still somewhat sustained relations in different forms between the hotel and *shebeen* in Salt River linked through their mutual patrons. From my experience the relationship between *skollies* and the hotel that was fondly remembered in the past is not present in The Locomotive, at least at an observable level from my length of time spent as a patron. There are however other groups that are based on the perimeter of the hotel: the outside walls of the hotel are a popular day-time hangout spot for *local* marginalised street groups to hang out, wait for small, informal work opportunities and to panhandle. These individuals are local in the sense they are South African born, many coming from Cape Town. My limited interaction with the group indicates that they rough sleep in the area and are well known by the *local* community, i.e. hotel patrons and long-time Salt River residents. Within the hotel there is an acceptance of the presence of local rough sleepers and street people situated outside the hotel. In contrast foreign national refugees seeking work in the area, individuals who also sometimes panhandle, are limited to hanging out on the pavements on the busy thoroughfares alongside the hotel rather than directly outside the hotel and other nearby businesses. In my time in

the hotel I saw staff and patrons alike having chats with local street people through the barred doorways that face onto the street. Patrons and staff expressed fondness for these individuals despite the occasional hassle they may provide, explaining to me that they have been *locals* in the area for as long as most patrons at the bar. These invisible, marginalised groups situated at the periphery of the hotel both physically and socially are brought into relation with the hotel in small, peripheral but noticeable ways; much in the same vein to the local *skollies* in the past.

4.4: Racial segregation and entrenched social differences in the hotel

Within the day to day running of the hotel bar in the past a distinct form of camaraderie was narrated as having developed, particularly between upper management and staff. Rod and Mrs Stewart explained that the backgrounds of staff were as diverse as the patrons: a group of co-workers cutting across gender, race, class backgrounds and various places of origin and home from around Cape Town. The stories of the interactions between staff including managers picking favourite staff members and allocating tasks and chores accordingly, time spent working with agreeable and unpleasant managers alike and coming together after closing to share a drink despite difference and a hard day's work all contributed to a sense of place and community within the hotel that was not necessarily known or experienced by the hotels' patrons.

"Those men [the owners and upper management] used to come in like the Gestapo. 'Why is the brass not clean on the door?' Then I had to be like a *mufasta* and clean, be very precise and just clean... On Friday evenings he [the owner at the time] would have a tot of J&B, some whiskey and we would smash glasses. His son, [Chris] would join too. [Chris] left for overseas but still on Fridays we would still carry on... He was good. Reliable. "

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

I was the first coloured guy to work in the canteen! Mr Kleiner didn't like coloured guys working there though. Mr Lipchitz couldn't believe that Mr Kleiner and I had become best friends. It's not that Mr Lipchitz was racist. He loved coloured people more than whites. It was just the law of the land." [Mrs Stewart interjects] "He didn't like me! He accused me of being a thief! One day we were R700 short but Rod couldn't count! He blamed me not him [laughter]... Those were good days."

(Interview with Uncle Rod and Mrs Stewart: 19 August 2011)

Behind the scenes these staff members, including Rod and Mrs Stewart, were involved in their own set of relations separate to but resonating with the community of patrons. Racism was often implicit in these relations. Rod explained that patrons were divided by race with separate bars provided for White and Coloured patrons, with Black people excluded from the hotel by apartheid law. Despite these physical and socialised divisions, Rod and Mrs Stewart discussed how people of different races still managed to find ways to interact across these divisions. The significance of the racial division of patrons and employees is not lost on Rod. Equally important for him was his ability to come into a personal relationship with management and win their trust and respect as a person despite racial boundaries. This enabled Rod to be able to bend and find some agency within the racially driven employee procedures at the hotel. These racially driven hotel structures are not seen by Rod as the fault of the hotel community though; the managers and owners are understood as just following the protocols of a certain bygone time and doing what they could under legislation. Although upper management personnel like Mr Lipchitz and Mr Kleiner are figures through which racial policies were carried out in the hotel and onto actors associated with the institution, Rod does not remember them this way. They become figures he had personal relationships with. They were figures he could rationalise the racism present in the hotel against as not a product of their personalities but rather as figures carrying out the law at the time in order to keep the hotel running. As with his narrative of the '*skollie*' element and violent crimes in the hotel, Rod made sure I understood that despite these turbulent experiences and difficulties, ultimately the diverse people of the hotel sustained relations and connections between each other. This was despite the numerous social issues that were prevalent in Salt River at that time. These interactions formed a community and a place behind the staff door that patrons did not see or interact with yet were still established relations that affected the hotel community. The experience of the hotel that Rod and Mrs Stewart remember is therefore not singular but multiple in its nature. This experience and imagining involved multiple scales of relationships and connections, all being brought into contact with each other in non-linear ways. Through the experiences of Rod and Mrs Stewart it seems that staff members at large popular hotels like The Junction navigated the connections between tensions and relations in tacit ways by the very nature of their day-to-day work at the hotel.

These narratives of particularly trying times in the hotel demonstrate that the memories of Uncle Rod and Mrs Stewart are not romanticised, nostalgic imaginings of place and people. They both are able to explain their memories of times of hardship and camaraderie in terms of the relations developed between people. In remembering the past, Ron and Mrs Stewart demonstrate how the

hotel was a dynamic construction in the past: although a sense of community and place was warmly remembered there is a cognitive awareness that relationships in the hotels were not just innately present or had emerged from a void but were rather a result of contested, comfortable and generally mixed social relations. The establishment of a shared community despite these tensions and differences is what is warmly remembered: a complex set of both comfortable and uneasy relations that emerged in the hotel despite immense social and political opposition. These conversations between relations of the past are influential in shaping the relations at present, these relations including attitudes affordable food and drink to find shared norms despite social, cultural, economic and political differences.

As with the hotels in the past, the community of The Locomotive Hotel at present is formed from the intersection of diverse groups with different social and economic backgrounds. As with the lunch time culture in the past, the brown bottle *quart* culture brings together a diverse range of people to share a common consumptive practice in the hotel (the significance of the drinking of a quart will be unpacked and discussed in the chapter to follow). The people frequenting The Locomotive are different to the groups that were once regulars at the old hotel. The Locomotive Hotel regulars cut across all race groups whereas only select groups based on race were allowed to enter and frequent the old hotel communities as patrons. Physical changes in the suburb including the building of the freeway on-ramp bridge behind the hotel that physically divided the suburb in two, the collapse of Salt River's industrial prominence in the Cape Town region and the division lines in the community drawn by apartheid-era forced removals were described by Paul as already having fundamentally affected the composition and numbers of the *local* clientele. By the nature of these physical changes in Salt River, the *local* of The Locomotive is not the same as the *local* of the older, now closed hotels. Although many regulars in The Locomotive were once regulars of older hotels in Salt River, a large number of patrons were either too young to have experienced the hey-day of the hotels in the suburb or were not residents or visitors to Salt River at the time. The differences in this community are accepted and acknowledged by patrons. As a new patron with no direct connection to the old hotel establishments, my time at The Locomotive was filled with friendly and engaged conversations with older patrons such as Pete. As a patron who had never experienced the old Salt River hotel culture I was not excluded from becoming part of The Locomotive's community; I was treated as a *local*, being involved in the purchasing of rounds of drinks at the bar and pulled into sharing stories about my own life and Salt River.

[Pete] tells me almost proudly that it's been around since 1910, that it used to have a kitchen and do good food, but it sadly has no kitchen at present. He pines over how "food would really make the place" and that it's sad the hotel doesn't have this lunch tradition anymore.

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

It is not only the composition of the patrons that is different from the hotels in the past. Patrons and interviewees alike commented on how the physical nature of the hotel at present is remarkably different. Patrons commented and acknowledged that The Locomotive is not the same hotel that it once was in the hotel institutions' zenith. For Uncle Rod, The Locomotive Hotel is not held in the same esteem as it once was along with other hotels of the past; explaining that the loss of the industrial rail-yard workforce that were the heart of the hotels' communities, the resultant loss of the distinctive lunch time culture and the assortment of interactions and relations that were present in and around The Junction cannot be recaptured by The Locomotive at present. It is not the same social centre of the community as the older hotels. The lack of a lunchtime culture at The Locomotive for Rod is an indication on the surface of the absence of other associated practices and cultures that were embedded in the hotel and promoted bringing people together. Sentiments held by regular older patrons at The Locomotive such as Pete and his group coincide with Rod. Pete and his group described a longing for lunch to be served at The Locomotive again, and that maybe bringing in a lunch service would facilitate structural and aesthetic improvements of the hotel to return it to its former glory. Despite the longing for certain physical attributes there is an understanding that The Locomotive is not only in relation to the hotels of the past because of physical attributes. The past and present are in conversation with one another because of the relations between actors across time and space – actors that actively create new potential to affect one another through encounters that would be regarded as routine and mundane.

Pete tells me about how Josh's son, his grandson proudly tells his friends when they pass the Locomotive that "dis my oupa se locie!" Pete explains to me that his friends and family know this is his local spot, his place to relax... Pete tells me "I work hard every day till one [in the afternoon] and then I come here to relax for the rest of the day". He explains to me earnestly that his children are old and his grandchildren are well looked after, he's paid his debts and deserves his rest.

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

This is resonated in how patrons are well aware that in Salt River, The Locomotive is the last establishment that continues to retain its historical heritage as an institution for Salt River's working and middle income classes despite its present day condition. Pete explained to me that The

Locomotive is his regular local spot because it provides a space in his neighbourhood that brings people together with whom he can share company and a drink with after a day at work. With the consumptive culture of brown bottle *quarts* fostering this sense of community that Pete desires, The Locomotive at present succeeds in providing patrons like Pete a space to reconnect with old friends, make new connections and negotiate the ever changing conditions of Salt River over a drink.

4.5: Relations of community, place and memory

Are these relations articulated through narratives deliberately actualised? Is it a conscious actualisation of emerging relations between notions and imaginings of the past and present? Perhaps they are. With what I have experienced and took part in as a patron I argue that in this stage these forms of relations that I have described are largely virtual and unconscious. The relations between actors in the past are assumed at present to be a norm, a norm that has carried through from the past. In having conversations with figures such Uncle Rod and Mrs Stewart there begins to emerge a realisation that the relations in place between actors in their experiences did not emerge from a vacuum. They often emerged through tension, contested meanings and shared commonalities. There never was a “normal” set of relations in the history of the hotels and The Locomotive. Through popular memory it only seems to have been normal, real and delineated because of the profound repercussions these relations had in shaping a notion of what The Locomotive, and more broadly Salt River, is at present for patrons and *locals*. The relations between past and present are seemingly linear rather in unfolding the imaginings and narratives of patrons and former staff they are more akin to a complex, infinitely multiple branching set of conversations. What is presented here is but a scratching of the surface of this network of relations. It is a network of relations and connections that are largely unconscious, tacit and form an assumed mundane, everyday norm at present. It is profoundly virtual in nature. These are virtual conversations shaping the potential for interactions, encounters and possible futures to come; the potential for certain possibilities and encounters constantly expanding and becoming diverse with every actor brought into relation.

An example that can frame this thinking is the relations around race in the hotel. As Rod explained, there were tensions around establishing himself as an equal human with hotel management.

Through hard work and dedicated service to the hotel he was able to find acknowledgment. At the same time during the height of apartheid, the hotels were under law racially divided. The boundaries of these laws were pushed as patrons and staff subverted laws to find ways to interact across the divide. It is because of how these boundaries that were strategically pushed and relations that were deliberately built across difference by individuals like Uncle Rod and between groups in the hotel that diversity is perceived as a norm in the hotel. The relations of the past narrated by Rod are not the same as the relations I experienced and co-constructed through encounters patrons of The Locomotive in the present but they reflect and resonate with each other. The relations from past to present are reiterative and recursive; they are constantly shaped and reshaped across time and space, in constant conversation with each other in a manner that obliterates a delineated notion of memory and imagining across time-space.

In thinking in terms of place and community, the reiterative nature of relations means that to argue for a “pure” sense of place, memory and community is an impossible task. In the context of Salt River and using a conceptualisation of place following Massey’s thought (1994, 1995, 2004, 2005) The Locomotive as a place could be understood as a reiterative, recursive form of the place of the hotel in the past. The Locomotive reflects the relations of the past but it is not solely constituted of it. The notion that the past is imagined and non-real or that its connection to the present is multiple, unstructured and often unobvious does not take power away from these relations. It is rather indicative of how notions of nostalgia, of heritage, of a singular sense of place, belonging and community are not pure in any form. These processes (of making a sense of place, belonging, etc.) are constantly being reconstituted and constructed in relation between the past and present: a notion of place at present for example is shaped by multiple relations of senses of heritage, belonging, nationality, race and countless other identity markers from many different actors. Place at present is organic and ever expanding; the past is no different. As the relations of the hotel that have been discussed demonstrate, there was never a pure or pre-structured sense of place, memory, belonging and community in the hotels’ past. Senses of place and of memory might be shared but they were multiple; they all demonstrate how the notion of the hotels in the past was constructed at the intersection of conflicting, contested, friendly and warm relations. This is important for patrons at present to bear in mind going forward: older residents and patrons I have come into contact with have been quick to complain about the current trajectory for the suburb and a sense of loss of place and memory in a rapidly changing area. The emerging predominantly African foreign national groups that have emerged in an area hit hard in the past by economic depression

and give the area renewed economic growth (often through forms different to that of the past including salons, second hand shops, taverns, Chinese markets and corner-shop cafés) have been negatively looked upon. These tensions often take form as throw-away remarks by old *locals* that, when questioned, the premise behind complaints begin to fall apart; complaints are often based in casual racism and social *othering*. In talking to patrons over these tensions I have tried to point out that the narratives they have just told me of the hotels in the past did much the same: they provided new forms of sociability during the height of apartheid when people of different races interacting, drinking and eating together would have been seen as the ultimate social taboo. The same patrons that eagerly discussed the history of the hotels have not been able to consciously actualise the reiterative relation between past and present: the hotels of Salt River similarly once produced new economic relations that were inconceivable to be thought of as mainstream at the time. Operating in conjunction with *shebeens* and holding good relations with local petty criminals because it made good business sense to respect established community members all came into the fold in the operation of the hotels. These are relations that would have spawned backlash from the broader Salt River and Cape Town community. At present, these hard fought for relations seem the norm but they were not always so. To reinforce this idea, amongst devout, long-standing Muslim families I have encountered in Salt River and Woodstock there still exists negative perceptions of the hotel carried through from decades earlier. These perceptions to this day are still implicated onto The Locomotive by this group of Salt River residents. A longing for a place of a singular, pure sense of nostalgia, of something untainted, of somewhere that has always been for a *local* community is impossible; the nature of multiplicity of relations from past to present deems it so. The conversation between past to present is not of static wholes; of a static past in relation to a static present, of a static past hotel entity in relation to the present-day Locomotive Hotel as a static entity. The conversation is of many, different intersecting relations between actors; their different hopes, dreams, ambitions, fears and identities coming into relation with one another to build a potential for many futures. This discussion chapter has traced a few of these possible trajectories out of infinite possibilities. These were trajectories of relations that I was able to pull apart from my position and my experience in the hotel. Undoubtedly patrons could imagine completely different relations that they embody between past and present.

The hotel in the sense of place and memory is a virtual construct with a real bounded physicality. It is a virtual construct in the sense that it is borne from relations between actors that are forever changing from past to present. With every new relation constantly being pulled in and negotiated it

somehow finds itself into the being of the hotel. This has defined a sense of what the hotel is to patrons: a constantly shifting and moving being that wants to grow through encountering difference, a being that rejects an existence that subsumes norms that would close off its ability to engage and grow. This is crystallised in Pete's attitude towards the lifestyle markets and boutiques finding prominence in the area; establishments that to him and other patrons seem to defy the very quintessence of The Locomotive and Salt River's other now long closed hotels.

4.6: Conclusion

A sense of place and memory within the hotel is never static nor is it linear and rational. The racial issues and illicit activities of the hotel are supporting evidence of this argument. As explored these were once on the fringe of Salt River society and on the margins of the hotels. At present racial equality is a given in The Locomotive. Many patrons I encountered openly discussed the local *shebeen* they regularly visit with involvement in informal economic activities acting as common points of conversation. These are accepted norms amongst patrons; they are elements of the hotel I eventually came to take for granted. They are synonymous with being a patron at The Locomotive and assumed norms of the hotel. These relations, these norms, however did not appear from a vacuum. They were formed through virtual recursive, reiterative processes between patrons and other actors. The hotel is in effect a self in of itself, a place or locus of popular memory; engaging in processes of continuously amassing potential through encounters and conversations from past to present towards futures. Encounters and conversations between actors (including but not limited to patrons) demonstrate in a recursive way how the margins are always brought in towards the centre: a process that always produces and reproduces the centre and expands it but always in an incomplete, unsatisfied manner. This is not co-opting difference but rather a centre being influenced by emerging differences. The actualisation of the encounter with this difference may not surface immediately but it establishes the potential for affect over time in some form yet to be realised. This dispels a myth of a "pure centre" of a place, of memory and of self. The hotel has and will continue to be socially promiscuous in its very nature, as are its patrons; constantly reshaping ourselves in relation to our encounters and conversations. The discussion chapter to follow further unfolds the network of relations in the context of a single social practice present in The Locomotive at present; the consumption of brown bottle *quarts*. This discussion begins to demonstrate how the drinking of quarts pulls actors into forms of emerging actualised relations. Drinking a brown bottle quart is not

only a practice steeped in relations with the past but it critically enables sustained relations between patrons, creating a point of intersection for difference. The drinking of quarts between patrons resonates with the lunch time culture of the hotels in the past in the sense of how it enables different people to continuously come into relations, find a common ground and a common language that can allow actors to actualise on the potential connections that exists across their difference.

CHAPTER 5: Second discussion – the sociability of the brown bottle *quart*

5.1: Introduction

This discussion chapter will begin to provide some context as to how the diverse reiterative relations discussed in the previous chapters begin to be actualised. This is a form of relations that begin to find structure and forms allowing for deliberate reflexive insight to develop; reflexivity that could allow patrons to actualise the potential connections held between them. This is not to make any leaps of logic to assume this potential can be realised and actualised in predictable and rational means. This chapter does not automatically assume that actors have the immediate capacity to gain the reflexive insight to be able to actualise networks of potential they are engaged with. The becoming of a self; of developing reflexive insight of one's place in the world (deliberate, conscious and on-going insight into the relationships of affect between self and other actors), is not a consequence of only spoken word encounters and conversations. It is a consequence of the mundane events, practices, norms and rituals that begin to bring different potentials into relation with one another. The relations fostered through these norms and practices enable actors to begin to see each other across their differences and find commonalities or points of reflection between each other; potentially becoming pretexts between differences to uncover points of mutual relevance. Previous chapters have already gone through some length to establish my own process involved in actualising my own reflexive potential as I have come to relation with difference and other actors in the academy and the hotel. In realising the importance of these processes and practices in my own context this discussion will retroactively begin to work with my old analytical drafts and fieldwork notes from my time spent in The Locomotive and Salt River. In reanalysing this material I begin to relate my own experience to the role of consumptive practices such as the drinking of brown bottle *quart* bottles in the hotel at present. Previous attempts to understand my experience of drinking a *quart* in the hotel made use of prescriptive and out of context consumptive theory to rationally explain the significance of the drinking of a *quart*. Rather than carry on with this line of inquiry this discussion chapter will take a different course: it will place value in the tacit, in the unspoken and the experiential that exists alongside spoken conversation in an attempt to provide a more interpersonal and relation-building purpose to drinking *quarts*. This discussion will

contextualise this purpose as one of many potential mundane practices that begins to bring people into more introspective forms of relation rather than just a passing encounter.

5.2: On the ground context

In the time spent in The Locomotive Hotel it soon became apparent that drinking was an important social practice. It was important in the sense that it even in early visits to the hotel I began to develop an idea of how its consumption was used by patrons to shape community. To give a practical example of this: on my first initial visits I decided per visit to drink a brown bottle beer in a 350 millilitre bottle; a Black Label *dumpie*. At the start of the fieldwork period I Salt River I figured that I could not frequent the bar without having a drink; it would seem odd and only serve to distance myself from other patrons. A *dumpie* was the perfect size; a beer to assist in immersion but low enough in quantity so I could retain my mental faculties. After a few days of drinking *dumpies* regular *local* patrons I had seen and had passed a few words with in passing, but had no real formal introductions with, approached me. These patrons asked why I had chosen to drink that particular size of beer day after day for the first week of frequenting the hotel. I explained that because I was coming to the hotel to do work in Salt River I could only have the smaller *dumpie* bottle and that I would have to go back to my office after the hotel to continue to work. The patrons shrugged their shoulders and chatted amongst themselves, quickly ignoring me. Later in the afternoon, as I bought another *dumpie* to prolong my visit to the hotel and attempt to make further connections with patrons beyond small talk, I was stared at by the same group of patrons. I tried to pass comments about the cricket shown on the television with the group sitting at the bar despite the obvious glares given to me and my drink. The bar was tensely quiet. After I had finished the drink, I was immediately met with comments from the regulars at the bar: I was cross questioned again for close to half an hour about why I would keep drinking the *dumpie* bottles and why I don't rather have a larger, 750 millilitre *quart* bottle. The patrons persisted with their argument, pointing to the notice that had been laminated onto the bar's surface and the fact that it was in such plain site, indicating the very reasonable price of a *quart*: twelve Rand. A short, lean man with a drawn face (the seemingly the self-appointed leader of the group of patrons) made sure that I was aware that I was buying 350 millilitre *dumpie* bottles for ten Rand each. He slowly and deliberately calculated for me that my two drinks totalling 700 millilitres cost twenty Rand, whereas if I bought a *quart* initially I would have received a 750 millilitre drink (a whole extra 50 millilitres) and would have saved myself

eight Rand. Another patron sitting alongside him further pointed out that I had actually made a net loss in millilitres of beer for the amount I paid. The group of patrons seated at the bar alongside these two men nodded and echoed 'eight Rand'. The faces of the group were stern and I felt like I had been reprimanded. As silence fell and we continued to watch cricket I considered what had just transpired. I thought that the size of my drink was an issue and that perhaps drinking a smaller sized beer was unacceptable. My rationalising of this was that from personal experience and accepted wisdom in South Africa and Cape Town, drinking establishments that market themselves as upper class will sell 'green bottle' beers (beers such as Amstel and Heineken that are perceived as being more expensive and therefore instilling status) over 'brown bottle' beers associated as South African Brewery's working class beers. Whereas brown bottle beers are commonly sold in *quart* bottle sizes at more affordable prices, green bottle beers are typically sold in smaller bottle sizes at higher prices. My leading assumption was that while consuming a *quart* was counter-culture in contrast to the green bottle culture common in gentrified establishments around Salt River and South Africa, a 'brown bottle culture' of consumption was preferred in the hotel because it was economical. In my mind I assumed: the cheaper the beer; the better and the bigger the beer; even better. I assumed I was being scolded because my choice of beer size was not an economical choice and a waste of potential beer in the minds of working class patrons. Upon making a conscious effort to purchase *quarts* as my drink to have while in the hotel the way I experienced the place changed considerably. I found a pretext to have sustained encounters with patrons and develop relationships, most notably with the short, lean man; the old regular, Pete.

Pete asks my name for the first time. I introduce myself formally despite having a few conversations with him days before. Pete tells me that they (him and his two friends from before) haven't forgotten me and my habit of drinking pints, not *quarts*. I reassure him that I can only stay for one pint and have to head out to other places and that I did remember the advice from before about getting a *quart*. He nods, and tells me that he knows I'll be staying for a *quart* later, that at The Locomotive it's expected you sit down for a *quart*.

The man next to me decided to call Mellissa over from the TV to get himself another Castle *quart*. I thought it would be a good time to order a beer. I sheepishly ordered a Black Label *quart* after the man received his Castle. Pete smiled widely and joked with me; "See! You going to have another! A big one! You like our company here and must stay longer!". Pete then introduced himself for the first time; he put his hand out and I shook it.

(Fieldwork at The Locomotive Hotel: 2 November 2011)

Over a few visits it became practice to divide a *quart* among ourselves to share or reciprocating previous generous offers of *quarts* bought. It was understood that to sit at The Locomotive to have a

quart marked the end of the day, there was no work to follow for patrons. The drinking of a *quart* marked a time to let go of tensions from work and be social with familiar faces. While drinking or sharing a *quart* I was introduced to increasing amounts of other regular patrons, engaging in passing conversations and having my back slapped by regular patrons who were becoming increasingly familiar. Subsequent visits to The Locomotive soon became about patrons warming up to me and conversations with regulars becoming more personal. From observation, introductions to regulars and passing conversation with people it became apparent that patrons were from mixed social backgrounds: men and women alike were represented as patrons in the pub although the majority were male; patrons were of diverse race groups and cut across multiple age groups. The patrons also displayed diverse working and middle class backgrounds including industrial workmen, business people and retirees. There was also variance in patrons' places of home and personal histories; while some patrons were either presently or in the past Salt River residents, a fair amount of patrons are part of Salt River's transient population. This transient population within the hotel were largely working or middle class individuals who resided around the area but not within the suburb itself yet still identified with the suburb as an important place of work and social recreation. Despite these different backgrounds the brown bottle *quart* provides common ground for all patrons, with nearly all patrons at the hotel on a day-to-day basis purchasing and sharing a *quart* while chatting and interrogating each other about their lives.

As I had experienced with Pete and his group, the brown bottle *quart* acts as a social lubricant despite difference, not because of the actual act of consuming alcohol but rather for what the *quart* represents in the hotel; a practical, economically thrifty option for all patrons regardless of background. This social norm imbued within this consumptive practice is not innate; rather it is shaped by experiences and memories that defined the hotel establishments in Salt River's past that patrons became open to sharing. In my figuring of the situation, the significance of purchasing a *quart* developed from being specifically of economic importance towards being the expression of social and cultural norms that are valued in the hotel, the same values that enabled Pete to criticize the lifestyle markets and boutique eateries emerging in the area. The *quart* is so particularly valued because it provides a way for people who are different to come into contact. All that is necessary for the encounter is in some form to appreciate the significance behind the *quart* in The Locomotive as a social norm. It was these held values that enabled people who are often fundamentally different to form bonds of kinship with each other over time; providing a pretext through which relations could be solidified and developed despite difference the difference.

5.3: Theoretical framing

There are several literature perspectives that could assist in providing insight into this importance placed in the drinking of a *quart*. I start this investigation with consumption literature that examines consumption, drinking in pubs specifically, as a community and place making practice. Valentine and Bell (1997) put forward arguments concerning the consumptive role in the construction of place and community that can be fostered through eating and drinking. These arguments demonstrate a relationship between community and consumption as understood through boundaries and group differentiation that create bounded *local* identities. Valentine and Bell's arguments are supported by specific case studies in English contexts (Williamson (1982) and Thomas (1978) referenced in Valentine and Bell) that explore the sociability of drinking. These case studies explore how community can be expressed through the relationship between food, alcohol and nostalgia based community in pubs and worker's clubs in England. The Williamson case study argues that solidarity was constructed in working class men's clubs through drinking and eating: shared meals offered the opportunity for men to gather, converse, interact and develop an identity around the club. As the role of shared meals diminished in the clubs drinking took a similar function to provide a communal consumptive occasion that could foster solidarity. Drinking in these clubs was only one form of multiple social interactions that people engaged in to develop community and as such drinking was often not in excess. The interactions of pub life; in particular consumptive practices such as eating and drinking, created social cohesion and inclusive communities around a particular identity of being a *local* patron. This bounded social cohesion is particularly important in the stability it provided in the changes facing working class communities at the time with increased fear of loss of community and *local* identities. Thomas' study similarly focuses on pub culture and drinking but explores a different aspect of developing community and place. Thomas case study argues that a notion of community in pubs was maintained through exclusionary social practices associated with drinking, with patrons engaging in rituals associated with drinking purposefully obscure to 'outsiders' of the pub, thereby reinforcing a very geographically bounded community through difference making. According to this argument it is through these exclusionary practices that community is bound to particular pub establishments; a practice that creates spatially divorced social worlds where two pub establishments in proximity rarely interact because of their separately developed notions of community and place. These two case studies contribute towards an argument for forms of

consumptive spaces such as pubs and the hotel establishments as creating community through nostalgia based inclusion, differentiation and exclusion. These works would argue for a specific identity and community assigned to drinking spaces with a single, linear history. They argue for a notion of place related to consumption through a culture based in nostalgia; a linear and static remembering of the past retained through to present manifested through certain consumptive practices in order to retain a coherent community in the face of social-economic changes that may threaten notions of *local*.

In terms of The Locomotive Hotel this reading could offer a lens that understands the hotel as constructed through a set of social tensions embodied in the consumptive practice of the brown bottle *quart* culture. This practice has been shaped by imaginings of the past and the significance of community that became a memorable and central aspect to the place of Salt River's hotel establishments in the past. The "community" of the Locomotive Hotel and its relation to consumptive practices can be conceptualised in terms of this literature lens as a direct continuation of the "community" of the past hotel establishments. Through this lens The Locomotive and its patrons becomes a delineated and singular community based in nostalgia of the old hotels and the perceived static cosmopolitan community of the hotel and suburb's past. This conceptualisation contains powerful and provocative imagery: a *local* community retaining a sense of community from the past because of the unique, diversity that was present then but now increasingly threatened by present-day change. The brown bottle *quart* culture within the hotel could then be conceptualised as serving a mirrored purpose of the lunch culture of the past; an attempt to maintain a community identity from the past, real or imagined; the product of nostalgia. As briefly discussed in the first discussion chapter, patrons of The Locomotive have indeed discussed how the culture of English styled working class communal gathering places in Salt River such as the hotel institutions are being lost and closing down, with new spaces taking their place. Comments from patrons around the forms of consumption in other spaces suggest differentiation between the hotel, its patrons and other spaces in the suburb and the new, different groups that occupy these spaces. These comments and my initial experience with the brown bottle *quart* culture suggested forms of inclusion and exclusion enforced by the patrons, enacted through consumptive practices to maintain a place through memories of the past as a response to threats to the community and place in Salt River patrons hold through the hotel. In engaging with patrons, becoming a part of the hotel myself and understanding how many forms of community, identity and senses of place there are in the physically bound space of The Locomotive these arguments however begin to fall short. Yes, practices such as drinking a

quart provides a practice to bring these senses of place and multiple identities into relation, but they do not become singular notions of self and identity. What has been offered in this discussion is but a snippet of the case study literature on offer, but these have been deliberately chosen to demonstrate a line of thought that is generally offered in consumptive focused literatures: a linear and singular notion of place and community that is created or shaped by consumption.

Arguments like those made by Goodman et al. (2010) begin to provide more scope in theorising the multiplicity embedded in the relationship between the *quart*, the patrons and the hotel. This work explores the multiple, situated ways people produce and consume space, not only in the present but also in terms of multiple historical embedded social relations. A central thrust to this argument is that consumption is a useful lens to open up the social relations present in conceptualising space and place from existing as bounded social, cultural, economic and political towards a more varied, intersecting network of relationships that cut across multiple temporal and spatial scales. Goodman et al. make use of historical perspectives of politics of place to explore the intersecting relationships of power and politics, the mobilisation of politics around consumption from past to present and how people relate to wide-reaching, global processes from their position in what they regard as place. In a similar research vein as Goodman et al., various studies in the geographies of alcohol have used drinking and drinking spaces as a specific lens to reconceptualise how place is constructed through social-cultural relations associated with drinking. Latham's work on cultural economies centred on drinking (2003) demonstrates how communities are formed through social and cultural differences being interrogated at nexus points - of which drinking spaces act as - where shared notions of identity can be constructed. Latham's argument demonstrates that in urban spaces rapidly changing through gentrification with the emergence of new groups, new hybridised forms of interaction are formed between old and new groups. Rather than conflict and exclusion developing through the encounters between starkly different groups, hybridised economic and social practices that contain relations of shared relevance has allowed for a different sense of community to be developed across difference. This relation doesn't develop a singular hybridised community but rather as multiple communities, publics and senses of place and belonging that are in constant engagement with one another across their differences in productive ways. The various case studies by Jayne et al. (2006, 2008, 2010, 2011), Holloway et al. (2008) and Valentine et al. (2008) share a similar over-arching project of delineating drinking spaces from existing as singular places and communities towards sites of multi-experiential engagements where identity classifiers such as religion, class, gender, race and

sexuality all intersect to produce remarkably different sets of experiences for a wide variety of people occupying the same and different scales of space.

Beyond the realm of drinking related case studies, similar arguments have been made particularly around the consumption of food; demonstrating the multiplicity of identity across scales of time and space that can be brought into relation. Holtzman (2006), Sutton (2001) and Baderoon (2007) all argue in some form that food can be conceptualised as a set of subjective, varied processes that are attempts to read and imagine histories that may have or have not existed. Baderoon's case study argument is particularly relevant to understanding my experience of the *quart* in The Locomotive; arguing that nostalgia and recollections of the past are embodied in food, with food as representing pasts real and imagined. This relationship between food and nostalgia is not static and linear but capable of marking and tracing social and cultural changes, allowing people to negotiate how they construct community and identity in changing contexts through actively contrasting different forms of eating and drinking in the past with forms of consumption at present. These literatures argue for an understanding of these relations as accounting for the capacity of consumptive practices to represent dynamic and ever changing identity between actors. In terms of The Locomotive it is these memories of the past remembered through shared events such as the daily lunch time that brought diverse groups and individuals together. The lunch time culture of the past that performed a similar function as how the *quart* is imagined through to the present; individuals such as me who had never experienced that past are able to engage with the popular memory surrounding the suburb, the hotels and its legacies nonetheless. As an additional theoretical step we can then discuss this in even more broader and abstract terms of consumption that parallel Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) thought on the relations between self and difference. Daniel Miller's perspective on 'things' is a useful starting point.

Works offered by Miller (Miller 2008, 2010; Miller and Woodward 2012) provide a notion of a common thing or artefact that can bring people into relation with one another over a shared commonality in a "thing"; the ownership or consumption of it providing a common denominator through which different meanings can be shaped. In thinking of the context of this discussion chapter, Miller's arguments are pertinent to how the significance of the brown bottle *quart* can be conceptualised. Without thinking of the cultural and social content or inscribed meaning of the *quart*, its very existence holds power as a pretext to draw into relation people who merely possess it

or consume it. The *quart* establishes potential for people with different subjectivities to be drawn together at many levels. Beyond the very existence of the *quart*, the social practice constructed around it is as important. This notion of ritual of the *quart* is rooted in a particular shared notion of memory, identity and place. Diverse meanings and purposes inscribed exist beyond the intended purpose and existence of the thing (i.e. consumption of an alcoholic beverage). The intended purpose may be perceived as being in fact secondary, it is the ritual and meaning inscribed that holds significance for people. Rooted histories and social forms may produce specific reasons for rituals being established; shared rituals around things can produce friction, competition, community and shared purpose. These are rituals that bring people into forms of relation with each other through the social life constructed around things.

5.4: Regarding the hotel's rituals as spurring reflexive engagement

These last sets of literatures have assisted greatly in theorising the multiplicity of identity embedded within the consumption of a *quart*. The argument offered in this discussion figures the role of not only the drinking of a quart but also the hotel in a way inspired by this line of thought. The drinking of a *quart* is not simply a consumptive practice that generates implications for community dynamics. It is rather something more foundational than the predetermined structured theoretical lenses previously offered. The consumption of a drink as a social norm between actors should rather be read as a pretext that pulls them into relations. These relations reflect the past through the reiterative and recursive nature of the sense of place, belonging, memories and narratives discussed previous discussion chapter. Rather than providing a complete answer that demonstrates a delineated relationship between a past and present through a consumptive practice and social norm, this discussion challenges these readings. This challenge takes the form of offering a more open ended possible approach to how a consumptive practice that is seemingly deeply embedded in the past could be understood. This dissertation has come to be interested in presenting and discussing an approach that offers a far more open, incomplete conceptualisation of the *quart* that understands it as one of many possible potential means to actualising potential; a possible potential out of many as understood through my framed experience in the hotel. In this analytical approach the brown bottle *quart* is but one potential part of a much larger recursive, reiterative process; the same process discussed in the previous two discussion chapters. I consider this process as a proto-reflexive engine; a part of a process that acts a means to bringing people into constant, mediated

relations with each other. It is a component of a process that further generates and fosters the capacity for actualisation through bringing people into frequent relation with one another; further surfacing ways for potential to be realised between actors. These are relations through which people can begin to realise the shared subjectivities and reflected commonalities between each other despite difference.

This proto-reflexive engine is a potential filled process, a process of forming a body without organs in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) writings. It is a process of beginning to find points of articulation between one's self and others that can begin to provide some semblance of a potential structure - a structure that can represent one's self in relation to the world. It is a structured, coherent body that is insightfully aware of this multiple nature of being that defies any form of binary explanation of its existence. Before this symmetrical structure is actualised, it is necessary to begin to envision what such a body could begin to look like, its nature, its existence and its being in a world. A proto-engine enables the becoming of a body without organs to begin to actualise this potential in some preliminary form; to begin to find emerging reflexivity; *begin* being the key word.

With this idea established in relation to consumption literature and Deleuze and Guattari I put forward the argument that, as understood from my experience in The Locomotive, the drinking of brown bottle *quarts* has the potential to represent the role of a proto-reflexive engine. This proto-reflexive engine is a means or a pretext through which people begin to find common forms of articulation to begin to come into prolonged and sustained relations with one another – relations that can begin to foster actualised recognition of how one's own self is produced through heterogeneity. The hotel as I experienced it exists as a self constituted of selves; it is a process of becoming formed through becomings. The hotel is the manifestation of place and memory at the intersection of conversation between actor relations and actualised in some form through practices like the drinking of a *quart*.

5.5: Conclusion

The significance of drinking a *quart* could be replaced with a multiplicity of other consumptive practices and social norms – means that fulfil the same purpose. The *quart* was chosen for discussion purposes because of my own experience in The Locomotive that led to it becoming significance from my specific position and experience in the hotel. Although I explore these relations from my position they may not necessarily be significant for me only; the discussions in this chapter do demonstrate that the *quart* is something significant between multiple actors – significant enough to have established norms around the artefact of the *quart*. It is in these norms associated with drinking a *quart* that the recursive relations of the hotels in the past begin to emerge, the same relations discussed in the previous chapter. This is undeniable. The lunch time culture in the hotel's heyday in the mid-nineties served to foster community. It became a great equaliser and supported and maintained a sense of 'cosmopolitan' community; a community that drew diversity from the periphery into its core. The lunch time culture brought people with differing backgrounds into relation with each other through something common; a pretext that enabled people to continuously come into relation with each other across their difference to give the potential to grow a sense of cosmopolitanism in the hotels and Salt River.

This is the key point in discussing this in present day contexts: the *quart* is something that pulls people into relation with one another across their differences. It is not just a consumptive practice. It is not a consumptive practice that through a linear reading could be understood to bring into relation abstract notions of the hotel in past and present together; a reading removed of the relations of actors within and between these time-space scales. As with the lunch time in the hotels' heyday, the *quart* is a pretext to bring actors into relation with one another. The hotel is not a removed, objective entity but a realisation of the intersecting relations between actors in Salt River: a place, a collection of memory, a body made of bodies. These relations between actors, mediated through a *quart*, speak to diverse notions of the past and present: community, public life, sense of place and belonging. In this sense it is performing a role that the lunch time culture once served but now in a form that has relevance for patrons in present day contexts. It is a relevant pretext that is able to provide a common denominator to draw people into relation. In drawing people together it begins to provide a medium, a common set of articulation between actors that enables a conversation; a sustained negotiation over each other's different and shared subjectivities and potential to connect with one another. In the context of what has been discussed in this chapter I

have argued that the *quart* represents a recursive process. The *quart* is a means to bring people into relations with each other did not emerge from a vacuum: how the *quart* is discussed and its function within The Locomotive has distinct call backs to the lunch time culture of the past. To restate: I do not feel that the drinking of a *quart* is a direct and conscious response from patrons to recall the past but rather it rather reflects it in unconscious, tacit ways. They are common as a norm, a pretext and an engine to bring people into form of proto-reflexive relations with one another. Drinking a *quart* is but one particular norm positioned on a broader recursive and reiterative process that embodies the virtual of The Locomotive.

CHAPTER 6: Third discussion – of inclusion and exclusion in the hotel

6.1: Introduction

Arguments from the previous discussion chapters can be synthesised to begin to surface a broader backdrop of inclusion and exclusion present in the time present at the hotel. This raises several questions that are addressed in this discussion chapter. Have the multiple relations present in The Locomotive (some of which that I identified and are discussed in the first discussion chapter) been understood by patrons as fundamentally being built on encountering and embracing difference beyond the boundaries of the “norm” for the hotel? Have reiterative social norms and consumptive practices borne out of these relations (as explored in the second discussion chapter through the brown bottle *quart*) fostered encounters with difference to the degree where engaging with heterogeneity can be actualised as a sustained process? The forms of deliberate exclusion that I witnessed and encountered that form part of the relations in The Locomotive indicate that the relations and practices that form the foundation of sociability have perhaps not actualised their potential. The purpose of these relations, norms and practices with long roots connected to the past may not be fully reflexively realised between patrons. What has been discussed so far in this dissertation are multiple relations that promote forms of inclusiveness on a virtual plane: the building of potential connections across social and cultural difference that exists in the relations between actors. Throughout these discussions however there has been an implicit sense of exclusion; what of those actors who are not physically based within the hotel as patrons and how do they or do they not share in the production of a sense of place and memory around the hotel? What of those actors who are not willing to engage with the practice of drinking a brown bottle *quart* or engage in a similar socially constructive pretext? What if these practices do not have any fundamental relevance for them that prohibits acceptance at the ground level? There are groups of individuals throughout Salt River and right outside the hotel for who these tensions are especially pertinent.

6.2: Nostalgia driven place and community

Some of these individuals and groups form part of a large and diverse foreign national community in Salt River. These groups from my own anecdotal experience in the suburb seem to be diverse in terms of nationality, religion, and income. Despite the multiple and diverse nature of these groups, a single group identity is placed upon these individuals by the patrons of The Locomotive. Off-handed comments and grumbings over drinks from patrons figure foreign national individuals in much the same way: individuals who are unwanted, are increasingly taking over the suburb and have replaced well established businesses with cheap, low-income overcrowded housing and informal economy styled small shops. The group of men who are situated on the sidewalks at the convergence of the main thoroughfares outside of The Locomotive are particularly met with scorn by patrons. This group of men numbering in the twenties are situated in the area as a form of economic strategy; waiting to be picked up by contractors on an informal basis for small work opportunities, often labour-intensive in nature. According to patrons, the businesses situated near the sidewalks where the men wait have tried numerous times to remove them. During my time frequenting the hotel the removal of their presence was openly supported by most patrons in the hotel; most patrons irritably commenting on the seemingly impossible task the local businesses have at removing this group. This group are seemingly as far from being part of The Locomotive's community as possible.

This conceptualisation of community in the hotel can be contextualised within recent social-economic changes in Salt River. Despite the multiple periods of change the suburb has gone through, narratives of exclusion and attitudes from patrons at The Locomotive seem to indicate that people have forgotten the changes and frictions that formed the cosmopolitan community fondly remembered in the hotel. Memory researchers (Field 2001, 2007; Swanson and Harries 2001; Pause 2002; Field and Swanson 2007, Geschier 2007) argue that in South African contexts, nostalgia of place and community coupled with loss shapes rememberings of community in a specific manner. This potentially creates idealised, single notions of community and place identities in the past that can be termed as *uchronia*. In this sense, emerging foreign national groups are perceived as changing and redefining physical space and the socio-economic geographies of Salt River. This however is true of many other groups during the course of Salt River's history, including many of the patrons who frequent The Locomotive. For patrons of the hotel the relatively sudden socio-economic shifts are perhaps at a pace not really experienced before; a pace that has made it difficult to reconstitute a sense of community, place and belonging in relation to the changes in the suburb.

The reason why the majority of hotels and businesses in the suburb that have closed down in Salt River in the past couple of decades has been narrated by patrons as a symptom of changing social and economic conditions, including the emerging prominence of foreign African national groups. These new groups having repurposed these abandoned buildings and sites that have become available at very affordable rates. These sites are perceived as being otherwise undesirable because of the extent of perceived urban decay in the area following several economic hits. Despite the legitimate need for these sites to find new purpose and relevance in order to be renewed, they are still understood by old locals and hotel patrons as having once represented a certain set of relations linked to memories and imaginings of a past place. The physical changes in the suburb coupled with more intangible social and cultural shifts have only worsened the tensions between patrons and groups in the suburb displaying difference. It is through this notion of *uchronia* - a nostalgia driven sense of place and memory - that exclusion becomes a response to perpetuate a memory bounded sense of place, a bastion of memory for a something pure that is imagined to have once existed (Reis 2000, Hawley 2004, Geschier 2007, Tonkin 2012). Massey (1995) generally argues against such conceptualisations because of the assumptions made in arguing for *uchronia* that past and present are in a delineated and singular relation with one another. However this only serves to reinforce what an argument for *uchronia* is fundamentally addressing; that a sense of place and memory can never be pure. As a counter point, an argument for an *uchronia* based conceptualisation of exclusion in the hotel would ignore any potential connections that may exist between foreign national groups and hotel patrons; and the potential for these connections do exist, even in exclusion. The manner of forming an identity against an *other* is in a sense a relation or connection across difference, an emerging responsibility to that which exists beyond self but is implicated in self as well (Massey 2004). Although the *uchronia* concept may be based in linear notions of nostalgia driven place making, it is useful in reminding us of the very real memory based tensions present in the virtual inter-subjectivities between patrons and other Salt River groups that they may have never made sustained direct contact with; tensions that have very real implications for how people come into relation with one another.

Another way to think of this exclusion is in terms of how irreconcilable (at the moment) these differences are is through the presence of (or lack thereof) a tipping point or forcing element that brings people into unexpected and sudden encounters with difference; difference that would otherwise be considered too stark to actualise meaningful and sustained encounters with. In terms of a network of potential between actors that can realised through diverse, multiple and unexpected

connections (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) these tensions could be conceptualised through the positions actors find themselves in: individuals and groups can be thought of as nodal points on a map of actual and potential interactions. Although patrons and foreign national groups may be too far apart to connect directly, there is still the capacity present to have bridged connections to bring them into some form of relation. This potential for connection always exists despite how tenuous and far removed by degrees it may seem, and could become actualised provided there is some sort of mutual driving factor. Nuttall (2008) discusses similar tensions; when popular memories of a well-established sense of place actively become irrelevant and marginalised by the introduction of different groups feelings of fear, insignificance and a loss of self come easily. These feelings may be too much and too irreconcilable for people to be deliberately insightful about any forms of future encounters with groups displaying difference; difference that may be blamed for the loss of significant markers for identity such as the physical dimension of a place. In terms of Nuttall's argument it may take accidental or deliberate, but unavoidable, encounters to initiate the first steps to building relations between far-removed differences.

6.3: Empathising with positions that promote exclusion

From my position I could not relate to these tensions in the context of the hotel and Salt River. In observing how the tensions played out in the hotel and engaging in conversation over what amounted to exclusion I found it difficult to come to terms with what was being said and to directly relate to the feelings of frustration and loss of place of fellow patrons. I have however begun to feel what I believe are similar tensions that have emerged in completely different contexts; tensions that emerged after work in Salt River and The Locomotive that allowed me to return to this work with new insight. Although I could not at the time relate my own experience to the frustration of patrons, my experience from the past year has allowed me to begin to empathise in some form with patron's relations and experiences that I could not acknowledge. This empathy is borne from a subject position I now hold. Although this subjectivity has emerged from remarkably different contexts and at a different time to those held by patrons (as perceived by me) during fieldwork, they now speak and are in relation to each other through the position I hold. Engaging in this empathising across different contexts has provided me with forms of acceptance for tensions I once saw no resolvable solution for in work around Salt River and my own life.

These tensions have surfaced over the past year as feelings of frustration and anger with the academy, with my department, with my academic seniors and with my thesis. I have felt dispossessed of something that I once felt a deep connection to. These are tensions with the academy I thought of (and to some degree still feel) as irreconcilable. There is a silent, internal acknowledgement made that I can never go back to the same path that led me to the process I am on now because of the direction this thesis journey has ultimately taken. The immense self-insecurity that developed during my time as a postgraduate student is something that cannot be returned to, it is irreconcilable difference that although different in origin runs parallel to those tensions felt by the hotel's patrons. In this acknowledgement there is a deep sense of loss; it is a fundamental acknowledgement that I have lost a potential future that was once glamorous and appealing to me. I still have utter fear around any form of engagement with what I perceive to be the academy because of what it represents to me. It is through only very recent small connections being made on the periphery of my department that I am rekindling familiar but still different relations. These are relations that may eventually reconstitute the connection I once had with the academy but more likely it will form a reiterative, different set of connections to those I had initially during my tenure as a full-time research student. The tensions of loss and fear that fellow patrons spoke of (tensions that have broader backdrops such as emerging new forms of sociability in South African cities, reactionary xenophobia and formation of hyper-localised place making) I was able to contextualise through my own experience and in terms of broader backdrops that are relevant to my interests and position (coproduction and dissemination of knowledge beyond the boundaries of the academy, non-realist and non-rationalist modes of investigation).

In this sense the tensions that fellow patrons spoke of I can empathise with in context of tensions that relate to a once substantial part of my identity: being a postgraduate student at a prestigious university involved in ethnographic research. It is still a part of my identity that I now fear because of what a tumultuous (yet self-productive) period it became. It was a period (self-produced from my own insecurities) of being made to feel insignificant, insecure and constantly uncertain in my work and in myself. These are the same deep insecurities with repercussions for African urban social forms that Nuttall (2008) discusses in her work and the same feelings that I believe patrons experienced around a sense of loss of what was once solid and known to them: place, belonging and self. They are all processes of self that were undermined and are now uncertain and insecure.

6.4: Positions around community, belonging and place

Is the notion of an element to force reflexivity and to begin to actualise some form of encounter with disparate difference earlier a possible way forward? To regard it as so would require different strategies for different contexts: do you take small steps and initialise brief, fleeting relations that are within your realm of relatable experience or do you immerse oneself into difference that is so stark that no other option is available but to engage it? I do not possess the knowledge or have spent enough time in the hotel and Salt River to suggest what outcome is possible or best suited. This is why I have saved this quandary that is present throughout this thesis for this final discussion. It is a set of tensions that must be considered in context of broader events and phenomena at multiple scales. It is still a formative set of relations in my mind, a new body without organs in my recursive process that claws desperately to find any form of symmetrical structure and articulation but instead ultimately clumsily fails in a spectacular manner. At this stage this tension is a hook that I currently try to make complex in my work on the streets of Cape Town; work that is always in conversation and reflecting upon the foundational experience in *The Locomotive*. In work on the streets of Cape Town with colleagues a strong belief has emerged that an element of forcing borne between actors can be surfaced in some way to better foster self-realised actualisation. Whether or not this self-actualisation borne from actors happens in a mutual and sustained way is a different set of questions. I similarly believe it is possible that within *The Locomotive* something can spur or spark connections between highly contested and friction-filled subjectivities. It may have to happen in sustained ways. It may be as simple as a single patron that represents a stark difference who defies all norms and making him or herself a regular; their very continued and unmoving presence in the hotel forcing patrons to begin to engage in any form with difference they had constituted into a far-removed other within their memories, imaginings and constructs of themselves, the hotel and Salt River.

I believe that in *The Locomotive* this driver, this forcing component, already exists. It exists as something that can propel some form of reflexive engagement between otherwise virtual and unrealised relations in the hotel. It exists in the practices and norms in the hotel; in the rooted history of these well-established nodes of relation that for decades have prompted encounters

across difference and as a result have - in a recursive manner - reconstituted the identity and norms of the hotel and its patrons over decades. It is in these recursive practices and norms, such as the lunch time culture and the drinking of a *quart*, that patrons and the hotel they create through their shared relations begin to interrogate, appreciate and pull themselves closer towards different experiences and people. It is an appreciation of difference that refuses to co-opt dissimilarity in a domineering approach. It is an approach that tries to accommodate difference, even on the fringes of its being, and in turn begins to pull its centre closer to these differences. The relationships the hotels have had with informality and illicit activities and how these became what are thought of as accepted norms at present resonate with this thought. It is how the shared popular memories and identities between patrons, staff and the hotel formed at the confluence of their relations strives to remain relevant across the decades: the continued encounters with difference at the hotels had enabled a virtual confluence of diverse relations in an ever-shifting suburb. This is the legacy of the hotel culture that The Locomotive and its patrons proudly base itself upon at present. It is a system of recursive relations consistently present in the conversations with patrons that has been outlined in the previous discussion chapters: a culture embodied in the understanding of the role of food and drink as a common denominator between different people and how this valued in the hotel. It is present in how this old institution is differentiated from emerging expensive slow food eateries nearby. It is something that is part of the DNA of the hotel: of its constituents, of its publics, of its patrons. To work with new publics and new communities, to find oneself emerging within them at the potential cost of putting one's own perceived attached meanings to community and public life at risk; this is what constitutes the place and memory of the hotel at its core of its relations. This is the existing foundation to spur on new encounters

6.5: Multiple potential futures for the hotel?

At least I would have argued so if the hotel has remained much the same since my last visit. The hotel was severely damaged and burnt in a fire accident in early 2013 and has since only recently reopened late 2013 into early 2014. Will the hotel find new relevance with it now reopened? Will it having closed for a period of time and reopened have changed dynamics that may fundamentally shift how people relate? I truthfully do not know what form a forcing component may take on and if it manifests at all in the hotel; I am unsure if the dynamics of the hotel will have fundamentally changed with its reopening. I do wonder that with insight and more time on my side if it could have

been possible for a more experienced me to return to the hotel to report back, to discuss these theorisations with patrons. Would this have induced reflexivity? Could I have acted as a mirror? I do feel as someone who entered into The Locomotive and as an active actor (my presence alone potentially having changed and affected relationships in the hotel in unknown ways) that I must consider my affect in the past and whether or not to make informed, deliberate action and affect happen in the future.

A key question I have asked myself is: as a research student who has spent a considerable amount of time investigating the hotels and Salt River how do I re-engage and share these internal reflections and understandings back to those I formed relationships with? I have considered whether this interaction would be the tipping point or the forcing element that sparks off some form of reflexivity concerning the relationship between the hotel, patrons and difference. Prior to the multiple rewritings of this thesis I would have argued that I had already fulfilled my commitment to re-engage. I had discussed *otherness* with patrons and raised the point that the nature of an emerging *intra-African multiculture* (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004) in Salt River could be seen as a new reiterative stage of the same sense of cosmopolitanism that The Locomotive patrons have contributed to Salt River in the past and present. I explained to patrons and *locals* I encountered that this may be a way for Salt River to have renewed relevance for multiple groups; to be reinvigorated by old and new groups alike. In having been involved in fieldwork outside of the academy (work that is far more prolonged and intense in nature than the time spent in Salt River) I have come to have an emerging appreciation for sharing and coproducing knowledge as a very slow, open ended and methodical process that requires coming into constant, sustained relations with people. Part of this process requires mistakes needing to be made, to be openly discussed between actors, for relations to emerge from these conversations that begin to open up further conversation. In this conceptualisation of sharing knowledge, it is not the content of words spoken that is important but rather the relations built through which a researched tension can openly be raised, deconstructed and challenged from other positions beyond the researcher. In this sort of prolonged work with a set of relations, an attempt to find common terms of reference and a common language to engage over these questions becomes essential. It is work that figures ethnography as a process-driven approach with a political and ethical commitment to representation rather than a methodological checkbox to be ticked. I feel this is something that this is missing from the work in this thesis concerning the hotels and Salt River. It is a commitment I lacked the experience and knowledge to actualise. I feel that to take seriously this commitment was beyond the limited scope of this thesis. To deliberately

affect and be affected, to be reconstituted and to reconstitute in turn and through understanding the landscape of interpersonal dynamics thoroughly enough to consider how to truly collaborate and co-produce knowledge along the lines of Gibson-Graham like action research (2002; 2003; 2008) is far too arduous a task without the necessary experience and insight. In saying this I have refused to hastily write in a token way and misrepresent this thesis process as having some form of clear cut collaboration with patrons that could have enabled reflexive insight. The very nature of the way I worked in Salt River has established an emerging foundation in my mind for relationships to be built; a foundation on top of which more difficult backdrop tensions could have been honestly addressed. In thinking about Salt River and the hotel through current learning, new opportunities and methods for work that is yet to be actualised or even imagined becomes possible. This thesis is not about providing an answer to these tensions but rather surfacing the emerging relationships and insights that were established with The Hotel and patrons in order to begin to think how to (if at all possible or even deemed necessary) work collaboratively with actors to address issues such as xenophobia, social *othering* and its repercussions for the hotel. This I feel is the work for future research that would have to follow on from the personal foundation that has been established throughout this thesis process.

It is necessary to interrogate from my position why I would I want to be this mirror, to establish the relations to truly collaborate with actors on investigating these underlying, larger tensions. As a white, well educated, urban elite with an interest in social heterogeneity, completing a research Masters and employed as a researcher that relies upon this interest, my intentions are impure and my position holds bias (Walsh 2008). This interest does not emerge from a vacuum of pure intention: I have my own specific needs for embracing heterogeneity, to foster actors building connections and identities across differences. All intention, including seemingly objective academic research, is based within contexts of specific positions between actors; including the researcher. This raises a further question: what of the diverse and multiple positions of patrons in The Locomotive? Through the encounters I have had with many patrons and Salt River *locals* it is evident that life is heavily invested in particular sites of memory and narratives of seemingly better days. The reality of the situated senses of place for these individuals is that an area that held many homes, hang-out spots, streets, shops, places of work that would have once been familiar and fondly remembered in a certain way is being fundamentally changed. Without physical memorialisation these imaginings, memories and senses of place have become physically ephemeral and immaterial in broader

changes throughout Salt River. This understandably has led to feelings of loss and fears of identity and a sense of place becoming increasingly invisible and redundant.

“In Alford Street, the street next to the Junction, there was an Indian barber shop. It was run by seven brothers. They’re still open. It’s R15 for a cut last time I went. Back in the day it was R2, R5. Everyone in Salt River would go.”

(Interview with Uncle Rod: 19 August 2011)

“That butcher, remember how they used to throw a whole sheep over the counter?... There was a butchery opposite the Junction. I saw how they made sausage. Sawdust, cigarette ends, meat on the floor. They would pick it up [put it in the meat]. But he did well, he was cheap.”

(Interview with Mrs Stewart: 19 August 2011)

There is regret and anxiety over something that can never be physically reclaimed; the spaces that marked the moments and memories of patrons have become repurposed by groups now finding new relevance in Salt River. I am not arguing that it is these tensions that are the sole driving force of place, memory and community in *The Locomotive*. This would be to perpetuate a narrow, delineated notion of relations between actors, place and memory; something that this thesis has tried to avoid. What I am arguing in the context of this discussion is that these feelings that are commonplace throughout Salt River and *The Locomotive* are held in a very real way by patrons and in turn has an effect on shaping their positions. In encountering people on the ground, their positions have to be acknowledged as much I have to acknowledge my own. Their positions have very real implications for how people interact and encounter each other in mundane and tacit ways. As much as I have a position that values heterogeneity and wanting to foster it, it is these potential positions of patrons that result in heterogeneity not being thought of in the same way. As an actor holding many positions amongst many other actors doing much the same in *The Locomotive* (this as opposed to a researcher parachuting in with an objective pure position that is place onto subjects) this is something I may have to come to terms with and acknowledge despite not being able to understand it or knowing how to better work with it from my position. This, I argue, is the beginning of seriously regarding the quintessence of empathy in research.

6.6: Conclusion

The histories of the hotel establishments that were relayed onto me - the history and memory I was affected by and outlined in the first discussion - are of constantly encountering difference. There is little doubt of the milieu of varied social-cultural relations present within The Locomotive. These are relations with the potential to produce notions of place, memory and communities that are always in flux, always coming in terms with each other and giving affordances to each other; these affordances allowing for common senses of place to be actualised despite difference. I would argue much of this happens in the virtual, in unconscious ways. It happens in such tacit ways that people may never be aware of how their sense of place, community, public life and identity is never in fact singular but manifold and shaped by difference they have unknowingly encountered across time and space. Place and community are therefore not pure: the history of Salt River and of the hotel establishments is of encounters across difference, of hybrid place and memory making. Has this been forgotten at present? Has the shift post 1994 and the change in public life and culture become too stark a difference to overcome? Are the resulting feelings of invisibility and loss of relevance too great to overcome for patrons and Salt River *locals*? I am unsure. Nuttall (2008) discusses the capacity for people to be stimulated by difference even though they may feel they have become completely invisible and have lost their relevance in a socially, culturally, politically and economically changing landscape. Deep within oneself is the capacity to brave this insurmountable difference, to want to engage with it, even in knowing that engaging with it could knowingly result in further losing certain hooks of identity, community and place. There is need for a force that emerges internally and externally that propels actors to engage with the difference that they have seemingly marginalised themselves from and to understand it. As Nuttall argues, the potential in these forceful events is for people to begin in very small ways to discover subject positions within themselves that reflect and are affected by changes they may have despised.

This is why perhaps the pretexts or rather engines for proto-reflexivity I have described are still proto-formative in nature. They are proto-formations of reflexivity and actualisation with the right foundation - with a deeply rooted history and culture of encountering difference - but still emerging in their form and the extent of their potential that has not yet been actualised by actors. There is perhaps a lack of force in these consumptive practices - in these deeply historically and memory entrenched social norms - to bring about true inter-reflexivity. This is reflexivity that would enable patrons to recognise the processes they engage in; processes of encountering difference and

building empathy within the hotel. This would need to occur in relation with new publics and new communities emerging in Salt River, not only with the *local* publics and communities currently present in and around the hotel. It needs to happen if the hotel is to remain relevant in Salt River. This wouldn't be something new either; it is the reason the hotel is an institution with a strong legacy in Salt River. The hotels from the past through to The Locomotive at present have constantly reconfigured and reconstituted themselves through their actors with these actors finding ways to constantly encounter themselves and each other through the norms and practices provided in the place of the hotel. Perhaps the practices and norms of the past that have informed those at present are not enough to force deeper reflexivity: reflexivity that could be needed to promote encounters with difference, to draw difference in and reconstitute what place, community and identity means. Perhaps the brown bottle *quart* is too much of a relic of the past that, while enabling encounters across difference within comfortable limits within the hotel, fails to force patrons beyond their comfortable boundaries. Perhaps there is a distinct lack of uncomfortable collaborations within the hotel at present, uncomfortable connections that can expand the relations and networks of potentials for patrons. The multiple potential futures that could emerge are unknown and speculative.

CHAPTER 7: Concluding remarks on process and the hotel

Energised from just finishing off my Honours thesis that dabbled in ethnographic methods and ethical concerns, in early 2011 I made a blissfully naïve ethical commitment for the Master's thesis by dissertation I was about to undertake: I refused, as a political and ethical commitment, to misrepresent the narratives and experiences of those I encountered. For my (at the time) twenty-two year old self this meant refusing to simplify the stories of people I was to encounter. It was a commitment to not do an injustice to people I was to work with by delineating their complex and multiple experiences and create assumptions that could risk being perpetuated. Although much has changed across the three year period since I made that decision, the commitment still stands. The work I now engage with on a day-to-day basis is informed by this refusal to create and assert uniform subject positions from my position as a researcher. Now a few years older, in hindsight and in retrospect this is a commitment I have reflected back onto my Master's experience to produce this dissertation. There is however a key difference between the research student I was three years ago and the research student who has now produced this thesis: after three years of refusing to complete a thesis that I felt was a misrepresentation of myself and the people I encountered, I now humbly acknowledge the limit of my position as a researcher engaging with the world. Conversations I had with people were not solutions or answers to a presupposed theoretical aim and objective but the beginnings of a new becoming for my own self. These were the drivers of affect that complimented and contested what I held near and dear: forcing me to hold parts of myself closer or to let parts go in the face of difference and in turn rediscover elements of my own identity long forgotten. I have learned three years on that presupposing an outcome from research cannot account for the growth of a researcher as a person and as a professional through her encounters with difference. In producing this dissertation I have come to understand that valuing the engagements with others in terms of how that encounter can contribute towards achieving research aims and objectives (to the benefit of the researcher and research as concepts removed from the broader context they are placed within) is positioned contrary to ethnographic principles and values. These are epistemological and methodological values and commitments that acknowledge in encountering and coming to terms with difference and heterogeneity is to understand that we can never fully know or understand from our positions alone. Our work, assumptions and imaginings are always incomplete, always holding bias. We can however continuously make complex our assumptions through relations that we develop alongside actors; not necessarily through the

position of a researcher but as a mother, a father, a child, a young person, an immigrant, an avid fan of a certain football club. As a patron of a hotel.

This could be what a conversation is: simply the outline of a becoming

(Deleuze and Parnet 2007)

What does this mean in the context of this dissertation; a reflective account of a period of research in The Locomotive Hotel and Salt River? It means to not have expected singular, delineated solutions or profound revelations of phenomena. This dissertation has unashamedly taken the form of an exploration of self in terms of difference in relation to others and difference in terms of self. The research that has been presented is a very earnest account of what I have experienced and understood through my relationship and encounters with others at a very specific time and place in my life and in parts of the city of Cape Town. This wandering is incomplete by virtue of its largely aimless exploration. These reflections, and so many more that are not represented, are contextualised against the fieldwork experience in Salt River and the hotel establishments of the suburb. The limiting nature of this contextualisation again makes this dissertation incomplete. The purpose of this dissertation may have in the past attempted to conjecture and theorise social norms and practices in the suburb's remaining hotel drinking establishment and its links to the history of Salt River however the dissertation as it now stands has openly served a more reflective purpose. In looking back on the experiences produced during fieldwork and working through the content previous write-up attempts a reflexive process has been enabled. It is a reflexive process through which I could explore how my own personal development provided the reflexive capability needed to make complex the assumptions I once held around the hotel and its patrons. It is a process that has afforded me some insight in my attempt to represent the people I encountered and formed relationships with. What this dissertation has produced is an emerging outline of social assemblages, sociabilities and encounters as understood from the positions I occupy. With this in mind, the "mapping" of social encounters and relations in Salt River's Locomotive Hotel present in this thesis is very incomplete, as it will always be. It is the incomplete nature of this thesis that will ensure I constantly return back to this work as a staging platform for further questions and enquiries that will emerge as I continue to work.

It is through this renewed mapping or exploration of my experience in Salt River that I can achieve my objectives and argue that the relations between patrons display far more dynamism in the construction of place and memory than what fixed, single and unmoveable readings may offer. A notion of community is plural, with the appreciation of this plurality a co-constructed and shared experience formed at the intersections of different social, cultural, economic and political identities and backgrounds. The remembered hotel culture was never 'pure' or naturally present, it was formed through the negotiation, adoption and evolution of conflicting norms, identities and backgrounds that over time had come to be assumed as normal processes of community and place making. Massey (1995) argues that over time the hybrid and constantly changing nature of social relations that came to form community is not often remembered however, as the previous section has explored through the narratives of former hotel employees, individuals are aware of the complex and uneasy tensions that came to develop a notion of community in the hotels. The Locomotive at present is so fundamentally different from the past in its physical and social nature, and that this is acknowledged by patrons, indicate that the network of relations of The Locomotive are not static and have been constantly evolving and changing across time. The shift from lunch time culture in the past to a brown bottle *quart* culture at present is one such change. The relationship between old and new consumptive practices is not a linear, static, continued tradition with the purpose to maintain a specific community. The lunchtime culture and the brown bottle *quart* culture share a similar purpose in that their central roles provides a common practice and norm for people of different backgrounds to negotiate social, cultural and economic difference. With my experience of becoming a *local* patron and taking part in the brown bottle *quart* culture I argue that this practice has evolved to allow for new, different individuals and groups to still find forms of community through a shared practice. Although such practices promote inclusivity, they are also used to exclude certain groups from the interacting with the sociability within the limits of the hotel. The physicality of the hotel, the drinking of *quart*, the anchoring to a diverse but still certain imagining of the past has enabled patrons to establish a chasm of perhaps irreconcilable differences between themselves and groups that are perceived as a threat to their sense of place and belonging in Salt River. I have argued that coming from a different trajectory of unrelated tensions I can empathise with the position of these patrons and why the sense of loss is significant enough to draw unconscious battle lines and produce social exclusions. I have also argued though that if patrons were to come into some form of forced engagement with this difference they would realise the extent of connection that may already exist with these excluded groups. This is because the ever evolving social norms and practices of the hotel that has been formed by patrons across generations are already drivers of encountering and relating to difference. These same social norms and

practices can be used to foster connection between patrons and new crowds of difference on the doorstep of the hotel.

What I have presented throughout this dissertation speaks in terms of my own experience as a researcher; an experience based in specific contexts and situated positions. How these relations have allowed for actors to continuously reconstitute themselves through encounters between self and difference is a theoretically significant argument made throughout this dissertation. In exploring my position as a patron at The Locomotive Hotel in Salt River and through insight gained in work I presently engage with I have been able to explore some of the virtual relations that have run from past to present. Also of significance is a demonstration how as researchers we are not exempt from these same processes; we are embedded and implicated within our work. Our research is never static; it is continuously shaped and reshaped by past encounters from years prior that haunt our present day work through affecting our unconscious and the ever shifting virtual potentials embedded within us. It is the same process that every person engages in when encountering someone, when having a simple conversation or passing by. The processes I have mapped in my arguments have made an effort to demonstrate this alongside the relations of the hotel: how very quintessential human our research is at its most fundamental level. This is something to be celebrated and to give rigor to our work. It allows us to proudly voice that in the realm of human geography being subjective is in fact objective and that wanting to know is proudly acknowledging how we do not know. In this sense, I believe that this piece of writing humbly achieves its aim in demonstrating these tensions in terms of being a researcher, a patron and a person navigating and finding a place in contexts across a three year period and is still on-going. It is the research process and becoming of an insecure postgraduate student and a hotel patron.

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